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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**AN ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND –  
SOUTH’S DISTRIBUTIVE COMMAND AND CONTROL  
CONCEPT**

by

Christian M. Averett  
Louis A. Cervantes  
Patrick M. O’Hara

December 2007

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> December 2007	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> An Analysis of Special Operations Command – South's Distributive Command and Control Concept			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Christian M. Averett, MAJ, USAF; Louis A. Cervantes, LT, USN; Patrick M. O'Hara, MAJ, USA				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> <p>Since national, regional, or continental borders do not hinder transnational terrorist organizations, a Theater Special Operations Command is forced to conduct operations across a wide range of political and social environments. Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH), the theater special operations component of the United States Southern Command, has determined that each sub-region within its area of responsibility has particular nuances that require separate and distinct command elements. Due to this determination, SOCSOUTH has decided to revise its approach to the command and control (C2) of all special operations forces operating throughout Central and South America. SOCSOUTH calls this new C2 approach "Distributive C2."</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis is to conduct a thorough analysis of the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept and propose recommendations for improvement of its effectiveness and efficiency. Using multiple theories of organizational design and recommendations based on personal observations and interviews, this thesis will propose a long term command and control structure for SOCSOUTH. The authors hope to provide SOCSOUTH and other theater special operations commands with a C2 structure that will allow them to better coordinate and prosecute their war on terror mission across multiple sub-regions and ensure proper integration into a larger global counter-terrorism strategic plan.</p>				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Special Operations, Command and Control, C2, Distributive C2, South America, Andean Ridge, Caribbean and Central America, Southern Cone, Tri-Border Area, SOCSOUTH, SOUTHCOM, USSOCOM			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 103	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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**AN ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH’S  
DISTRIBUTIVE COMMAND AND CONTROL CONCEPT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since national, regional, or continental borders do not hinder transnational terrorist organizations, a Theater Special Operations Command is forced to conduct operations across a wide range of political and social environments. Special Operations Command-South (SOC SOUTH), the theater special operations component of the United States Southern Command, has determined that each sub-region within its area of responsibility has particular nuances that require separate and distinct command elements. Due to this determination, SOC SOUTH has decided to revise its approach to the command and control (C2) of all special operations forces operating throughout Central and South America. SOC SOUTH calls this new C2 approach “Distributive C2.”

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct a thorough analysis of the SOC SOUTH Distributive C2 concept and propose recommendations for improvement of its effectiveness and efficiency. Using multiple theories of organizational design and recommendations based on personal observations and interviews, this thesis will propose a long term command and control structure for SOC SOUTH. The authors hope to provide SOC SOUTH and other theater special operations commands with a C2 structure that will allow them to better coordinate and prosecute their war on terror mission across multiple sub-regions and ensure proper integration into a larger global counter-terrorism strategic plan.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ACI	Andean Counter-drug Initiative
AI	Area of Interest
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AR	Andean Ridge
ASD/SOLIC	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict
BG	Brigadier General
C2	Command and Control
CA	Civil Affairs
CAFTA-DR	Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement
CCA	Caribbean and Central America
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COA	Course of Action
COM	Chief of Mission
CSO	Center for Special Operations
DA	Direct Action
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DNI	Director of National Intelligence
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoS	Department of State
ELN	El Ejército de Liberación Nacional (English translation: National Liberation Army)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (English translation: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HARB	Homestead Air Reserve Base
HVT	High Value Target
J2	Joint Intelligence Directorate
J3	Joint Operations Directorate
J4	Joint Logistics Directorate
J6	Joint Communications Directorate
JIACG	Joint Interagency Coordination Group
JIATF-S	Joint Inter-agency Task Force South
JOD	Joint Operations Division
JSOU	Joint Special Operations University

JTF	Joint Task Force
LNO	Liaison Officer
LOO	Lines of Operations
MAFB	MacDill Air Force Base
MILGRP	Military Group
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NGO	Non-Government Agency
OBM	Organizational Behavior Model
OEF	OPERATION Enduring Freedom
OIF	OPERATION Iraqi Freedom
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OPE	Operational Preparation of the Environment
PN	Partner Nation
POLAD	Political Advisor
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
REB	Regional Engagement Branch
RSO	Regional Security Officer
RWOT	Regional War on Terror
SAO	Security Assistance Organization
SC	Southern Cone
SITREP	Situation Report
SO	Special Operations
SOCFWD	Special Operations Command Forward
SOC SOUTH	Special Operations Command-South
SOF	Special Operations Force
SOF LNO	Special Operations Force Liaison Officer
TBA	Tri-border Area
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
USAFRICOM	United States African Command
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USEUCOM	United States European Command
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
VBSS	Visit, Board, Search, Seize
VTC	Video Tele-Conference
WOT	War on Terror

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First, we would like to thank our families for their unparalleled support and encouragement throughout this endeavor. We are also indebted to our thesis advisor, Dr. David Tucker, for his insight and guidance. Dr. Tucker's expertise was invaluable in shaping our thoughts into a coherent written product.

We are also thankful for the support and access given to us by Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, the commanding general of the Special Operations Command-South (SOC SOUTH), his operations officer, Colonel Gregory Wilson, and the rest of the SOC SOUTH headquarters staff.

We also want to thank our peers — whether they are Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, or Marines — and the faculty and staff of the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School. You provided a challenging academic environment that compelled us to work not just harder but smarter.

Our most sincere gratitude goes out to the men and women serving throughout all branches of our armed forces. Your courage, dedication, and selfless service are truly inspirational.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The United States and our partners continue to pursue a significantly degraded but still dangerous al-Qaeda network. Yet the enemy we face today in the War on Terror is not the same enemy we faced on September 11. Our effective counterterrorist efforts, in part, have forced the terrorists to evolve and modify their ways of doing business. Our understanding of the enemy has evolved as well. Today, the principal terrorist enemy confronting the United States is a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals — and their state and non-state supporters — which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends.<sup>1</sup>

National Strategy for Combating  
Terrorism, September 2006

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President George Bush addressed a joint session of Congress and the American people and declared a war against international terrorism. President Bush stated that “our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but...will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”<sup>2</sup> The Department of Defense (DoD), specifically the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), was then charged with planning, resourcing, and executing the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

The current USSOCOM approach for the GWOT is to synchronize “global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other Combatant Commands, US Government agencies, and international partners through collaboration and the employment of national-level systems to maximize these combined effects.”<sup>3</sup> To facilitate this approach, the DoD has vastly increased the size of the USSOCOM staff and integrated personnel from other U. S. Government (USG) departments and agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006: 5.

<sup>2</sup> President George Bush, Address before a joint session of the U.S. Congress on September 20, 2001, “U.S. Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed August 24, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> The United States Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command 2007 Posture Statement*, MacDill Air Force Base, FL, 2007: 3.

Additionally, USSOCOM transformed its organizational structure by establishing the Center for Special Operations (CSO) and the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG). The CSO now exercises command and control of GWOT operations from its location at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the substantial growth of both the USSOCOM headquarters staff and special operations units<sup>5</sup>, the theater special operations commands (TSOCs) themselves have experienced virtually no manning increases. This fact seems at odds with the approach favored by Michael Vickers, the current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC).<sup>6</sup>

Operations in the GWOT primarily occur at the country and sub-region level. Strategy is most effectively made at these levels, as well as at the global level. Our system of high command across departments and agencies is focused on the regional level, which is of reduced importance in both GWOT strategy and operations. In short, our interagency command structure is not well aligned with the geographic realities of the GWOT. GWOT operational areas should be established at the country and sub-region level. Sub-regional task forces are needed to conduct integrated area surveillance and cross-border operations. DoD senior counterterrorism presence is in need of significant elevation at the Country Team level, particularly in countries with which the US is not at war. Standing Interagency Task Forces commanded by either a military officer or CIA officer, as operational circumstances dictate, should be established as the execution arm for the designated operational areas.<sup>7</sup>

Given Mr. Vickers' rationale, the TSOC staffs, rather than USSOCOM's, should be enjoying manpower growth. Because they are regionally focused, these TSOCs have the potential for a greater working relationship with the U.S. Embassy country teams. These country teams are typically comprised of senior representatives from the State

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<sup>4</sup> General Bryan D. Brown, Commander, United States Special Operations Command, "US Special Operations Command: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 40 (2006): 39.

<sup>5</sup> General Bryan D. Brown, Commander, United States Special Operations Command, Statement before the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on January 31, 2007, "Current Manning, Equipping, and Readiness Challenges Facing Special Operations Forces," *Congressional Record Daily Digest*, 110th Congress, D135.

<sup>6</sup> The White House, "Personnel Announcement," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/04/20070404-4.html> (accessed April 19, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Michael Vickers, Testimony before the House Committee on Armed Services' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities on March 15, 2006, "Implementing GWOT Strategy: Overcoming Interagency Problems," *Congressional Record*, 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d session, Vol. 152, no. 33..

Department, Central Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Department's Security Assistance Organization and Attaches. These teams form a valuable mechanism for ensuring interagency collaboration and coordination at the operational level. Typically however, Department of Defense representation to an embassy's country team is limited to personnel grounded in the doctrine of general purpose forces who possess a limited understanding of special operations capabilities. Excepting the Marine Security Detachments, there are two "basic components of DoD's 'overseas presence' in U.S. embassies: security assistance offices or SAOs (overseen by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, defense attaché offices (overseen by Defense Intelligence Agency))."<sup>8</sup>

As former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Andrew Hoehn noted, "SAO personnel serve under the direction and supervision of the Chief of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission (COM). The regional combatant commanders command the SAOs in all matters that are not functions of the COM."<sup>9</sup>

Depending on the particular embassy, the security assistance offices (SAOs) may operate under different names. Nonetheless, "[a]n SAO is a DoD organization, regardless of actual title, located overseas with assigned responsibilities for carrying out the security assistance management functions."<sup>10</sup> These six primary responsibilities include:

1. Foreign Military Sales Case Management
2. Training Management
3. Program Monitoring
4. Evaluation of Partner Nation military capabilities and requirements

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew Hoehn, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Strategy), Testimony before the Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations on May 1, 2002, <http://www.DOD.mil/DODgc/olc/docs/test02-05-01hoePN.rtf> (accessed August 22, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Hoehn, Testimony, May 1, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Directive 5132.12, *Consolidations and Reductions of U.S. Defense Attaché Offices (DAOs) and Security Assistance Organizations (SAOs)*, by Donald Atwood, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991, <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/513212p.pdf> (accessed August 22, 2007).

5. Rationalization, Standardization, Interoperability
6. International Armaments Cooperative Program<sup>11</sup>

The Defense Attaché Office (DAO) is typically the other standard component of an Embassy's military workforce. The DAO is part of "a multi-mission intelligence and diplomatic organization that operates in 134 locations, managing and supporting a variety of Department of Defense and USG missions."<sup>12</sup>

Specifically, the various DAOs are given the following core tasks in accordance with DoD Directive C-5105.32:

1. Obtain and report political-military information
2. Diplomatically represent the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Services
3. Serve as primary political-advisor to the Chief of Mission.<sup>13</sup>

As illustrated above, both the DAO and SAO deal with more conventional military mission sets. Naturally both are focused entirely on the country in which they are residing. Regional issues are typically managed by the Geographic Combatant Commander.

Through its execution of the regional war on terror plan, the Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH), a component of the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and USSOCOM, has acknowledged particular cultural, geographic, and/or political nuances within its area of responsibility (AOR). For instance, certain countries may be exceedingly sensitive to U.S. military presence within their borders while some may welcome as large a DoD presence as the U.S. government is willing to commit. Additionally, being culturally and politically attuned to regional intricacies enables the U.S. military to tailor operations for each specific country or sub-region.

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<sup>11</sup> Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Security Assistance Organization (SAO) and Responsibilities," PowerPoint Presentation, April 2007, <http://www.disam.dsca.mil/Research/Presentations/4%20SAOResp.ppt> (accessed August 22, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Hoehn, Testimony, May 1, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Hoehn, Testimony, May 1, 2002.

As a result, SOCSOUTH has divided its AOR into three major sub-regions. Consequently, SOCSOUTH has revised its approach to the command and control (C2) of all special operations forces (SOF) operating throughout Central and South America. The intent of this new C2 approach, called “Distributive C2,” is to facilitate rapid decision making, promote interagency coordination, and navigate the particular political environments within the SOUTHCOM AOR.<sup>14</sup>

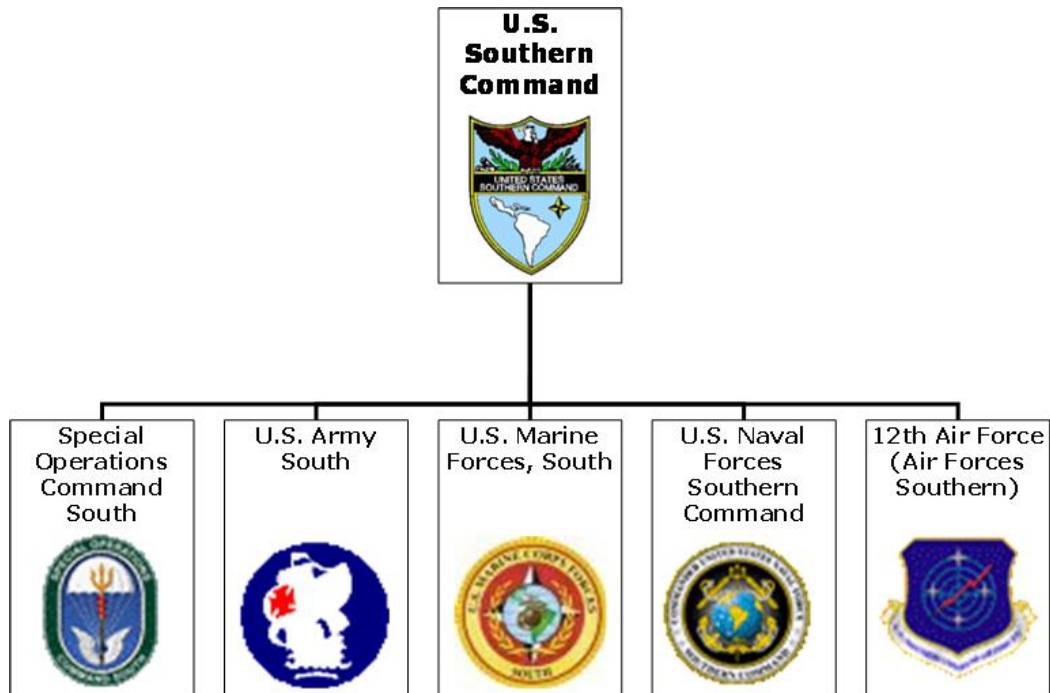


Figure 1. SOUTHCOM Organization

## A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct a thorough analysis of the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept and propose recommendations for improvement of its effectiveness and efficiency. Using multiple theories of organizational design and recommendations based on personal observations and interviews, this thesis will propose a long term command and control structure for SOCSOUTH. The authors hope to provide SOCSOUTH and other theater special operations commands with a C2 structure

<sup>14</sup> Captain Paul Brister, “Information Paper on SOCSOUTH Distributive Command and Control,” Special Operations Command South, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, January 18, 2007.

that will allow them to better coordinate and prosecute its war on terror mission across multiple sub-regions and ensure proper integration into a larger global counter-terrorism strategic plan.

This thesis will determine if the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept does improve its ability to prosecute its Regional War on Terror (RWOT). In this regard, this thesis will seek to answer the following questions:

- Does this new C2 concept improve SOCSOUTH's speed in conducting RWOT operations?
- Does this new C2 concept improve SOCSOUTH's flexibility to adapt as its terrorist opponent changes its methods and force structure?
- Does this new C2 concept improve SOCSOUTH's integration into the interagency and the plans of higher commands?
- Does this new C2 concept improve SOCSOUTH's ability to foster and achieve innovation in its approach to the RWOT?

## **B. RELEVANCE**

According to the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, "Today, the principal terrorist enemy confronting the United States is a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals."<sup>15</sup> Since this terrorist enemy is not thwarted by national, regional, or continental borders, a TSOC such as SOCSOUTH is forced to conduct operations across a wide range of political and social environments. Prior to 9/11 much of the U.S. military, TSOCs included, was focused on conventional warfare involving nation-states. The advent of the GWOT necessitated a doctrinal shift for the U.S. military. The new terrorist enemy transcends national boundaries, maintains no formal standing army, and is devoid of any centers of gravity which might be struck. Simple tools such as the internet prove a remarkable enabler for these terrorist organizations to plan and operate at a speed and precision that their forbearers of the

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<sup>15</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*.

1980s did not enjoy.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the U.S. military was forced into a paradigm shift regarding how best to combat the threat of the transnational terrorist.

SOC SOUTH's logical question was how to organize a regionally focused special operations component command element to address this new threat. "Much like the Goldwater-Nichols Act accomplished for our Armed Forces two decades ago, we should assess what new or revised authorities are needed to enhance interagency coordination, and build a more joint and integrated process."<sup>17</sup>

## C. METHODOLOGY

Following the introduction, the second chapter of this thesis provides an overview of the terrorism threat assessment for the entire SOUTHCOM AOR. Each sub-region – the Andean Ridge (AR), the Southern Cone (SC), and the Caribbean and Central America (CCA) – is assessed for both its common and its region-specific characteristics.

The third thesis chapter is dedicated to a thorough explanation of SOC SOUTH's Distributive C2 concept. This section examines the vision of SOC SOUTH's commander, Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, who initiated this alternate approach. SOC SOUTH's RWOT strategy is also reviewed followed by a description of its current C2 structure. Additionally, chapter three provides a comprehensive examination of SOC SOUTH's Distributive C2 concept by defining and listing relevant characteristics. This section also describes organizational changes resulting from SOC SOUTH C2 structure, both at its headquarters and its forward operating locations. This chapter concludes with a review of just what the new Distributive C2 concept entails once fully implemented.

Chapters IV and V each focus on two of SOC SOUTH's three new C2 nodes. Both of these chapters provide a general background on the command situation for that particular sub-region. The majority of each chapter discusses proposed recommendations

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<sup>16</sup> Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Testimony before the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee on February 6, 2007, "Posture Statement of General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," *Congressional Record Daily Digest*, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, D141.



derived from personal observations, as well as individual interviews. The intent of these recommendations is to provide constructive improvements to SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 concept. The third C2 node, which encompasses the Caribbean and Central America, is not examined since it is still in the conceptual phase and SOCSOUTH has yet to begin any implementation.

Chapter VI introduces several military definitions of command and control and provides a discussion of organizational design principles that are relevant to Distributive C2. These definitions and principles are utilized to analyze SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 Concept.

The seventh chapter focuses on identifying overarching strengths and weaknesses with SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 concept. This chapter summarizes previous recommendations for improvement common to each sub-region. Once the analysis of the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept is complete, this thesis will propose its own long-term Distributive C2 concept, based on SOCSOUTH's original plan and the recommendations proposed by this thesis. The goal is to further improve SOCSOUTH's coordination with subordinate elements which in turn will enable greater success for its RWOT missions. Consequently, SOCSOUTH's effort should enable full integration into the larger USSOCOM plan for defeating global terror networks.

## II. THE TERRORISM THREAT ASSESSMENT FOR SOCSOUTH

If he attacks Iran, in two minutes Bush is dead...We are Muslims. I am Hezbollah. We are Muslims, and we will defend our countries at any time they are attacked.<sup>18</sup>

Mustafa Khalil Meri, Young Arab  
Muslim from Paraguay, quoted in  
interview on MSNBC

### A. INTRODUCTION

Historically, the U.S. response to economic, political, and military issues in Latin America and the Caribbean has varied greatly, but has generally focused on partnerships. America's regional foreign policy has ranged anywhere from Franklin D. Roosevelt's *Good Neighbor Policy* to John F. Kennedy's *Alliance for Progress*. The Bush Administration's grand strategy for the SOUTHCOM AO is termed *Partnership for the Americas*.<sup>19</sup> The current policy views most issues through the national security lens of the global war on terrorism (GWOT).

*Partnership for the Americas* not only emphasizes partnering with nations but also between multiple U.S. agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs) operating throughout the region. United States Southern Command's *Strategy 2016*<sup>20</sup> is a ten-year endeavor broken down into five phases. USSOUTHCOM recognizes that there is little potential for major combat operations between two or more nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, *Strategy 2016* recognizes that all elements of

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<sup>18</sup> Pablo Gato and Robert Windrem, "Hezbollah Builds a Western Base: From Inside South America's Tri-Border Area, Iran-linked Militia Targets U.S.," *NBC News*, May 9, 2007, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17874369> (accessed September 21, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Southern Command, *United States Southern Command Strategy 2016*. Miami, FL, March 2007. <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/ourMission.php> (accessed September 19, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> USSOUTHCOM, *USSOUTHCOM Strategy 2016*.

American power must now collectively focus on how the U.S. can help mitigate the crime, corruption, poverty, and terrorism problems that challenge “security, stability, and prosperity” in the region.<sup>21</sup>

General policy statements do not completely define U.S. strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean because broad policies and strategies do not address the myriad of local issues at the country level and below. American relations with individual nations in the region vary dramatically from the highest levels of cooperation on trade agreements and security issues on one extreme to an absence of diplomatic relations and trade embargos on the other. This was a driving factor behind SOCSOUTH partitioning its area of responsibility into three major sub-regions. These sub-regions include the Southern Cone, which includes the troublesome Tri-Border area (TBA) of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, the Andean Ridge of northern South America, and the Caribbean and Central America (CCA). Each of these sub-regions possesses unique problems that require multi-disciplined approaches from SOCSOUTH.

## **B. THE SOUTHERN CONE**

Within the Southern Cone, USSOUTHCOM has identified internal government corruption at all levels and the growing presence of Islamic extremists in the largely ungoverned TBA as the greatest threats to U.S. national security. According to a recent report to Congress,

The TBA has long been used for arms and drug trafficking, contraband smuggling, document, and currency fraud, money laundering, and the manufacture and movement of pirated goods. The terrorism report maintains that the United States remains concerned that Hezbollah and Hamas are raising funds among the sizable Muslim communities in the region but stated that there was no corroborated information that these or other Islamic extremist groups had an operational presence in the area. Allegations have linked Hezbollah to two bombings in Argentina: the

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<sup>21</sup> USSOUTHCOM, *USSOUTHCOM Strategy 2016*.

1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires that killed 30 people and the 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, a recent investigation by NBC news supports claims of an extensive smuggling network operated by Hezbollah in this area. This joint Telemundo/NBC investigation discovered that “the operation funnels large sums of money to militia leaders in the Middle East and finances training camps, propaganda operations and bomb attacks in South America.”<sup>23</sup> The report also details how these individuals carry Latin American passports, speak Spanish, and generally pass themselves off as Hispanic. This fact has major implications when coupled with the current U.S. immigration reform debate. If undocumented migrant workers can illegally enter the United States seemingly with ease, then logically the same holds true for terrorists.

At this time Hezbollah is designated by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization. Clearly Hezbollah is taking advantage of the ungoverned space and the lucrative drug and human smuggling trade networks that extend through to the Andean Ridge, Central America, and the Caribbean. This terrorist organization is already known to have a presence in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Prior to 9/11, Hezbollah was responsible for more American deaths than Al Qaeda. While one operation in the United States was derailed by law enforcement,<sup>25</sup> given Hezbollah’s tenacity it is likely that they are continuing to operate from within America’s borders.

To help combat terrorist operations the governments of Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, have committed to regional cooperation through the “3+1” mechanism on security in the Tri-Border Area. In December 2006, delegations from these nations met and established a comprehensive strategy for containing terrorism and

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<sup>22</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues*, by Mark P. Sullivan (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 22, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Gato and Windrem, “Hezbollah Builds a Western Base.”

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Pipes, “Hezbollah in America: An Alarming Network,” *The National Review Online* (August 28, 2000), <http://www.danielpipes.org/article/349> (accessed September 25, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> David Asman, “Hezbollah Inside America: FOX News Tells All in Documentary,” *Fox News*, 18 January 2007, [http://www.foxnews.com/printer\\_friendly\\_story/0,3566,244002,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,244002,00.html) (accessed September 25, 2007).

other illegal activities in the TBA.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, it is too early to ascertain whether the 3+1 group's effort will bear any fruit.

### **C. THE ANDEAN RIDGE**

The highly profitable cocaine trade prominent in the Andean Ridge is one of the main enterprises fueling smuggling networks in the TBA. The illegal Andean drug industry has deeply penetrated the global markets and is currently helping to sustain violent guerrilla groups such as Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and El Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (National Liberation Army). Both FARC and ELN have been designated terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department. Although they have lost some momentum recently, both groups continue to pose a threat to the Colombian government and American forces stationed there.

Due to an enduring relationship with Colombia, however, the United States is able to collaborate on issues of major concern to both. The Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) is the primary U.S. program that supports *Plan Colombia* and is largely focused on combating drug trafficking and spurring economic development in the region. According to recent reporting, 90% of all cocaine that reaches the United States originates or passes through Colombia.<sup>27</sup> The cocaine produced in the Andean Ridge moves through two main corridors in the CCA, the Mexico-Central American corridor and the Caribbean corridor (see Figure 2).

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<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Communiqué of the 3+1 group on Tri-border Area Security*, Prepared by the Counterterrorism Office, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/39706.htm> (accessed June 8, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Congressional Research Service, "Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and Related Funding Programs: FY2005 Assistance," by Connie Veillette (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 10, 2005).

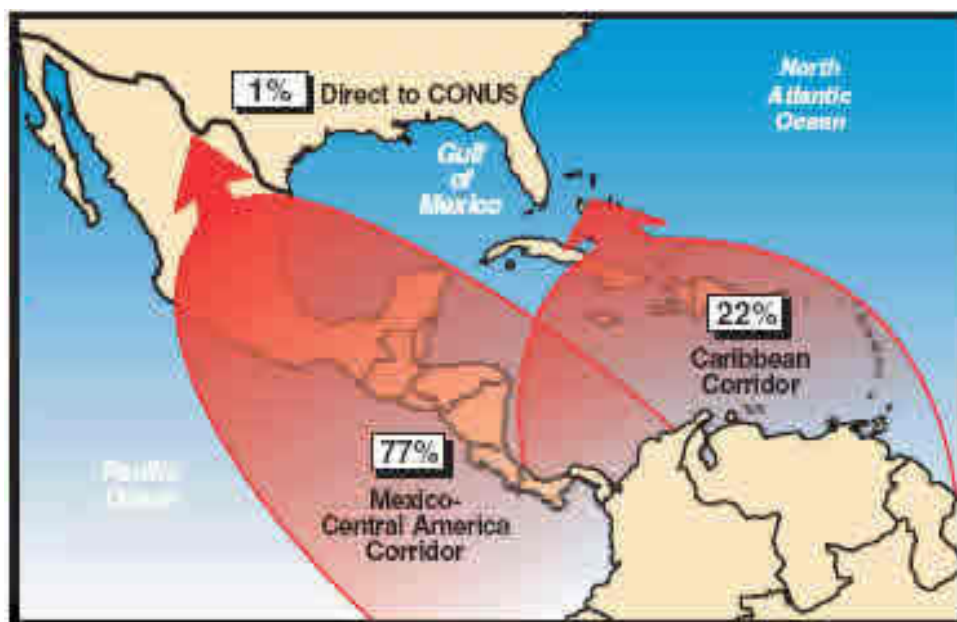


Figure 2. Cocaine Flows to the United States in 2003<sup>28</sup>

#### D. THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

While the Southern Cone, Andean Ridge, and CCA each have distinct security concerns, these issues are all interrelated. Stability in the Andean Ridge directly translates into interdiction worries for the CCA. In order for drug cartels to move their product into the U.S., drug dealers use the extensive smuggling networks that spread throughout Central America and the Caribbean. The CCA is host to thousands of points of origin from which illegal drugs and human cargo are transported into the United States. Revenue generated from the drug trade can potentially flow back to Islamic extremists operating from within the Southern Cone's TBA and help finance terrorist operations throughout the western hemisphere. In addition, the CCA is host to a growing gang problem that spans Mexico and the United States.

To help combat these threats USSOUTHCOM has a semi-permanent joint task force (JTF Bravo) at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras in order to provide security assistance to partner nations in Central America.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, *National Drug Threat Assessment 2005 Summary Report*, Prepared by the National Drug Intelligence Center, February 2005, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs11/13846/cocaine.htm> (accessed June 8, 2007).

While not directly related to drug interdiction, the United States has several mostly economic collateral missions which affect relations in the CCA. For example, the U.S. has a trade embargo with Cuba that dates back to 1961. However, Cuba recently discovered large quantities of oil within its territory. A 2006 report by the U.S. Geological Survey confirmed that, “the North Cuba Basin held a substantial quantity of oil — 4.6 billion to 9.3 billion barrels of crude and 9.8 trillion to 21.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.”<sup>29</sup> This recent discovery could have a far-reaching impact on the U.S. position towards Cuba given that other countries such as China, India, Norway, Spain, Canada, Venezuela, and Brazil have already shown interest in this new find.

An example of a more cooperative economic enterprise is the Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Thus far membership has been extended to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This trade agreement is the second largest U.S. export market in Latin America behind a similar one with Mexico.<sup>30</sup> The countries affected by CAFTA-DR are some of the poorest in the region. In order for this endeavor to succeed the U.S. must focus on poverty reduction through a host of civil programs throughout the region.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, there are several programs favorable to the United States in Latin America and the Caribbean. These are focused on economic development, regional security and stability, crime and corruption issues, and trade negotiations. However, when crafting strategies at the country level and below, a certain degree of ambiguity arises between the U.S. Departments of State and Defense as to which is the lead agency.<sup>31</sup> This difficulty comes to light when both departments have concurrent presence

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<sup>29</sup> Todd Lewan, “Cuban Discovery Could Pour Oil on Troubled Waters,” *Associated Press*, July 30, 2006, <http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060730/news1n30oil.html> (accessed April 28, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Free Trade Agreement, “U.S. CAFTA-DR Free Trade Agreement, How can U.S. Companies Benefit,” U.S. Government Export Portal, <http://www.export.gov/fta/CAFTA/index.asp?dName=CAFTA> (accessed April 29, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey, Jr., “The Country Team: Restructuring America’s First Line of Engagement,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 47 (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007): 149-151.

and conflicting programs or operations in a particular sub-region or country. Conflict resolution usually results from internal bureaucratic compromises.

National policy should place more emphasis on the sub-regional rather than the regional level. A shift in focus from big to small could have a positive impact where the real policy decisions are implemented. Success requires the unified efforts of numerous American entities employed in the region through carefully coordinated campaigns developed at each country team.



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### III. SOCSOUTH'S DISTRIBUTIVE COMMAND AND CONTROL CONCEPT

The Romans said, and I quote, "If you would have peace, you must be prepared for war." And while we pray for peace, we can never forget that organization, no less than a bayonet or an aircraft carrier, is a weapon of war. We owe it to our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, and our marines to ensure that this weapon is lean enough, flexible enough, and tough enough to help them win, if God forbid, that even becomes necessary.<sup>32</sup>

Congressman Bill Nichols, Hearings  
for the Goldwater-Nichols Act, 1986.

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Recently, SOCSOUTH proposed, "the need to establish a flat, networked command and control architecture that incorporates multiple, tailored C2 nodes spread throughout South America."<sup>33</sup> To describe this C2 arrangement they have coined the term "distributive C2." SOCSOUTH has determined that their current organizational structure is inadequate to respond effectively to emerging problems throughout the region based on taskings from USSOUTHCOM.

The term commonly used to describe their approach prior to distributive C2 is "swarmballing."<sup>34</sup> The premise behind "swarmball" is elementary: when a crisis arises whatever staff personnel are least busy are thrown at the problem. While expedient, the downside to this ad hoc method is that typically these individuals have little expertise with the country in question.

Distributive C2 transcends much of the traditionally accepted command and control concepts published in joint military doctrine. It also illustrates an important cultural transformation by some senior military leaders with regards to how the U.S.

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<sup>32</sup> Congressman Bill Nichols, Opening statement for the House Armed Services Committee on February 19, 1986, "Reorganization of the Department of Defense," *Congressional Record*, 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d session, no. 99-53.

<sup>33</sup> Captain Paul Brister, "Information Paper."

<sup>34</sup> Based on several interviews conducted at SOCSOUTH Headquarters, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, on May 7, 2007.

military integrates with other government agencies and partner nation colleagues towards a unified strategy for the SOUTHCOM AOR.

This chapter analyses SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept. It begins with the vision of Brigadier General (BG) Charles Cleveland, SOCSOUTH's commanding general, who initiated this concept. Additionally, this chapter reviews SOCSOUTH's RWOT strategy followed by a description of the organization's current C2 structure. This section then transitions to a detailed explanation of all facets of the SOCSOUTH distributive C2 concept. This chapter concludes with a review of the resulting organizational structure stemming from SOCSOUTH's command and control endeavors.

## **B. BRIGADIER GENERAL CLEVELAND'S C2 POLYGON**

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, USSOCOM was tasked by the Secretary of Defense to plan and execute the global war on terror. As previously discussed, USSOCOM's response in part, was to dramatically increase the size of its headquarters staff. Additionally, in May 2003 USSOCOM created the Center for Special Operations (CSO), to oversee this new role as a supported combatant command.<sup>35</sup> The CSO "combines the intelligence (J2), operations (J3), and planning (J5) functions... [and serves] both as a force providing element and a GWOT warfighting cell."<sup>36</sup> At the CSO, liaison officers (LNOs) from multiple government agencies facilitate interagency coordination for counterterror efforts.

The CSO, however, does not have C2 of the majority of the SOF forces executing the GWOT. Most SOF are controlled by Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) that are components within each of DoD's geographic combatant commands (GCCs). BG Cleveland labels this approach to the GWOT C2 as "The Raid" because this is how most direct action missions, such as raids, are conducted (See Figure 3).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, "Center for Special Operations (J2/J3/J5) (SCSO)," *Special Operations Reference Manual*, Hurlbert Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, June 2005: Chapter 2-5.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, "Center for Special Operations," Chapter 2-5.

<sup>37</sup> Brigadier General Charles Cleveland (Commander, Special Operations Command South), interview by authors, SOCSOUTH Headquarters, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, on May 7, 2007.

Top-down directives, large higher headquarters, executive level interagency coordination are indicative of the Raid approach.

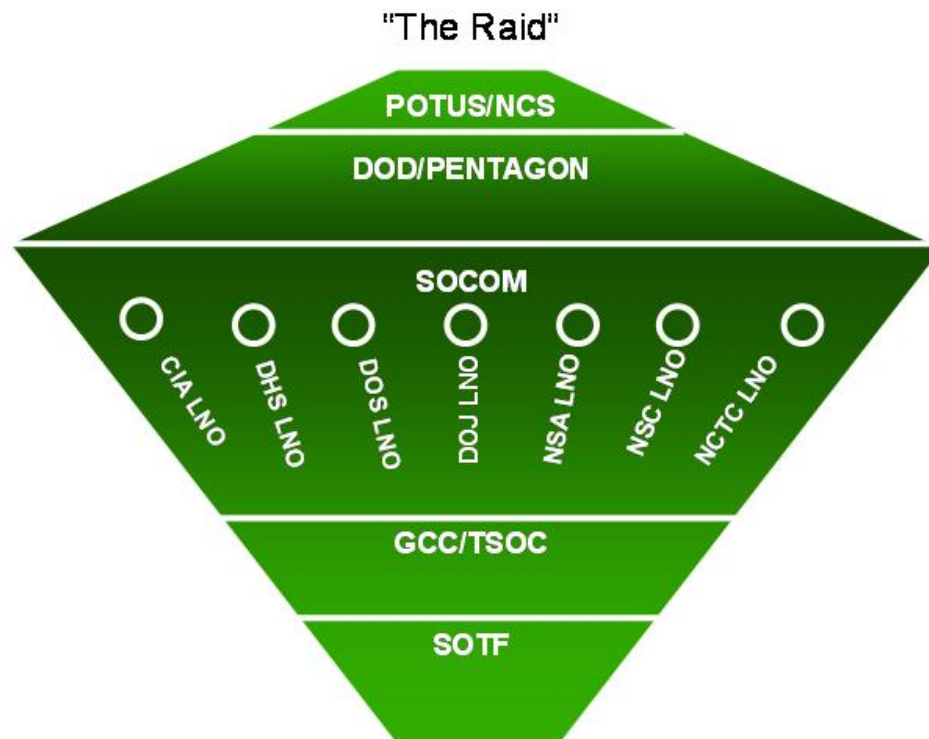


Figure 3. Current USSOCOM Approach to GWOT C2<sup>38</sup>

SOC SOUTH's commanding general, however, has a different view of how headquarters should be staffed to lead the GWOT. BG Cleveland's method, entitled "The Long War," is a bottom-up structure with the majority of all interagency coordination occurring at the lowest level possible.<sup>39</sup> In addition, his vision projects his staff officers forward into theater, a bold step towards decentralized execution. As discussed in the thesis introduction, each sub-region within Cleveland's AO has unique cultural and political characteristics that keep a top-down, centralized plan from being as effective as possible. SOC SOUTH offers a smaller, more agile focus centered on U.S. Embassy country teams (See Figure 4). This is something that a larger, more cumbersome headquarters such as USSOCOM is unable to achieve.

<sup>38</sup> Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, note given to authors, SOC SOUTH Headquarters, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, May 7, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> BG Cleveland, note given to authors.



Figure 4. BG Cleveland's Approach to GWOT C2<sup>40</sup>

### C. THE SOCSOUTH RWOT STRATEGY

SOC SOUTH has deemed its overall strategy in its regional war on terror to be a "layered defense of the homeland"<sup>41</sup> with the homeland being the United States (see Figure 5). According to SOUTHCOM's *Theater Security Cooperation Plan*<sup>42</sup> and *Command Strategy 2016*<sup>43</sup>, the three layers of this strategy are: disruption in the Southern Cone sub-region, stabilization in the Andean Ridge, and interdiction in the Caribbean and Central America.

<sup>40</sup> BG Cleveland, note given to authors.

<sup>41</sup> Special Operations Command-South Joint Operations Division, "Special Operations SOUTH Distributive Command and Control COA Development," PowerPoint Presentation, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Southern Command, *Theater Security Cooperation Plan*, Miami, FL, June 2007, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/theaterSecurity.php> (accessed September 19, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> USSOUTHCOM, *USSOUTHCOM Strategy 2016*.



Figure 5. SOCSOUTH Layered Defense Strategy

The purpose of SOCSOUTH's efforts in the Southern Cone (SC) is to disrupt transnational terrorist activities. The SC sub-region includes the South American countries of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Special operations forces

in this area integrate their operations with other USG and partner nation government activities. These same SOF forces also serve as advisors in regional shaping operations.<sup>44</sup>

In the Andean Ridge (AR), SOCSOUTH is focused on maintaining or increasing the stability of existing governments within the sub-region through a sustained SOF presence, as well as the targeting of high value narco-terrorist leaders. The AR is comprised of the nations of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Here SOF forces provide coordination, counterterror planning assistance, intelligence support, operational preparation of the environment (OPE), and inter-agency liaison to many of these Andean governments. In addition, Joint and Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) are used to build relationships and maintain partner nation capacity.<sup>45</sup>

To accomplish its drug interdiction role in the Caribbean and Central American (CCA) zone, SOCSOUTH has two focused efforts. In Central America, SOF is used to increase US and partner capabilities by providing training at regional training centers, leveraging existing partner facilities, and funding new equipment and additional training. SOF also advises partner nation counterterror units and ensures they are capable of acting on behalf of internal security interests. In the Caribbean, interdiction is accomplished through the integrated efforts of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South's (JIATF-S) counter-drug operations. These SOF elements provide full-time vessel support as well as maritime visit, board, search, and seize capabilities.<sup>46</sup>

Since disruption, stability, and interdiction operations all require different military assets, SOCSOUTH recognizes that these three distinct missions may also require different command and control arrangements. As a result, SOCSOUTH has eschewed a traditional military “one size fits all” approach with its Distributive C2 concept.

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<sup>44</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development.”

<sup>45</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development.”

<sup>46</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development.”

#### **D. ANALYSIS OF THE PREVIOUS SOCSOUTH C2 STRUCTURE**

Before initiating its Distributive C2 concept, SOCSOUTH followed traditional doctrinal methods with regards to structuring command and control. The SOCSOUTH headquarters staff was organized along standard functional lines, as is typical of most US military staffs. Each staff function, be it command, administration, intelligence, operations, logistics, communications, etc., had its own joint directorate.

SOCSOUTH's operations directorate, or J3, was divided into three divisions: the Readiness and Exercise Division, the Joint Operations Division (JOD), and the Special Activities Division. All matters related to current and future operations were managed from within the JOD.<sup>47</sup>

The JOD was, and still is, the center of gravity for the execution of the SOCSOUTH commander's strategy and the C2 of all SOF operating with its AO.<sup>48</sup> Previously the JOD was further task divided along functional lines – current operations, future operations, air operations, etc. – but in each case staffed only with enough personnel to focus on priority tasks. This led staff officers in the JOD to become Jacks-of-all-trades but masters of none. The end result was the aforementioned “swarmballing”.

From its headquarters near Miami, FL, SOCSOUTH primarily oversaw the activities of its subordinate elements operating in theater. Each individual SOF element reported up to SOCSOUTH HQ for additional guidance, authority, and support that it could not obtain locally. SOCSOUTH did however previously deploy two small forward C2 elements into theater briefly (See Figure 6). Nonetheless, these elements were focused on specific missions inside single countries rather than being regionally focused. Consequently these forward C2 elements did not oversee the activities of other SOF elements operating within its area of interest outside its particular country.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Special Operations Command-South Joint Operations Division, “Special Operations SOUTH Distributive Command and Control Joint Operations Division Reorganization,” PowerPoint Presentation, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, 2007.

<sup>48</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization.”

<sup>49</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization.”



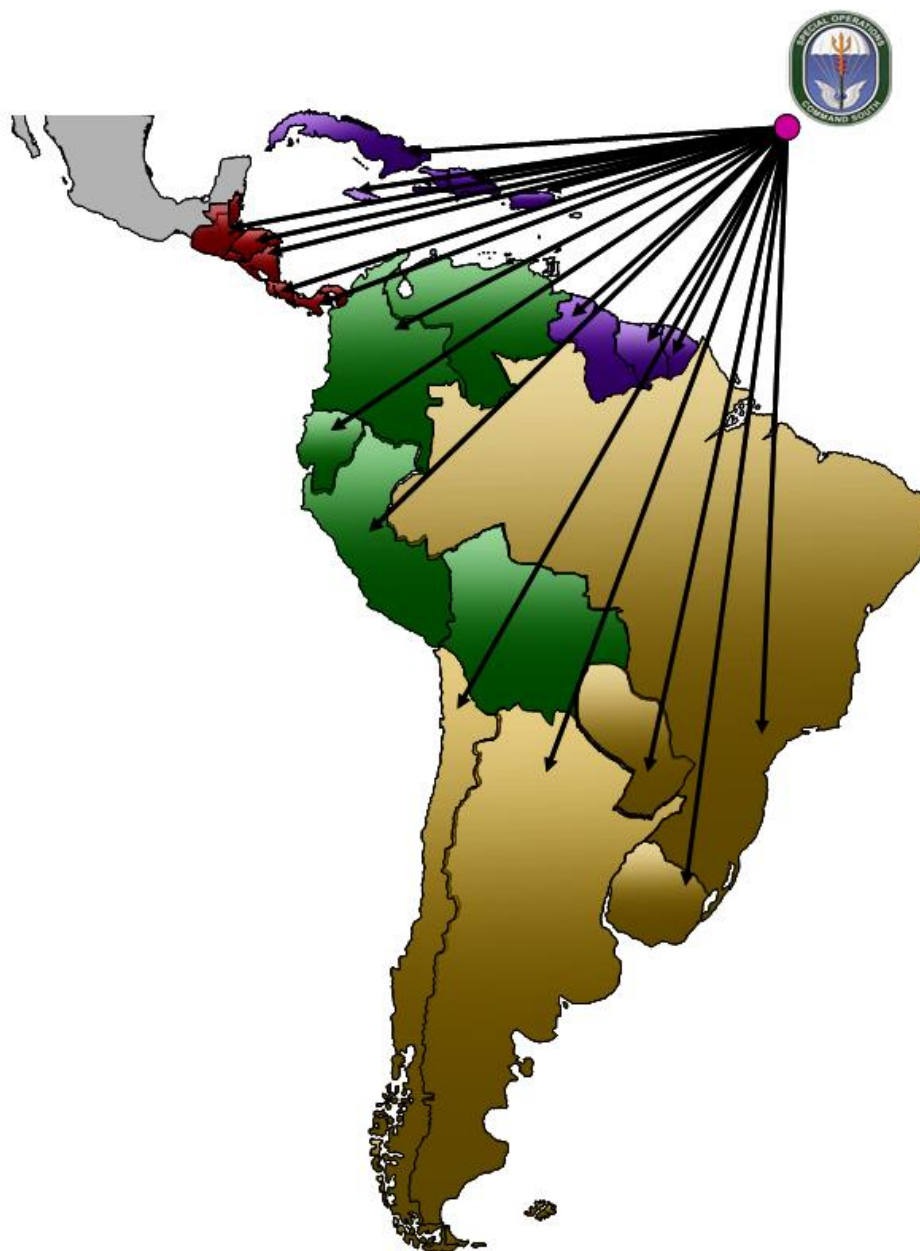


Figure 6. SOCSOUTH Overall C2 Structure – Current

The JOD's ability to provide sub-regional situational awareness to the SOCSOUTH commander was limited due to its being a functionally oriented organization, manned only for priority tasks, consisting of multiple subordinate elements reporting to a single location. For example, prior to implementing its Distributive C2 concept, SOCSOUTH's JOD Chief would post the various daily situation reports (SITREPs) from its subordinate units deployed into theater. However, since none of the

JOD personnel were permanently assigned to monitor a particular country or sub-region, they had no sense of ownership and waited to be assigned a particular operation or crisis—swarmball ensued. This hampered the commanding general’s ability to execute his RWOT.<sup>50</sup> As detailed in subsequent sections of this thesis, the new Distributive C2 concept amends this by assigning each JOD member to a specific sub-region, thereby giving that individual a stake in the same.

## **E. DISTRIBUTIVE C2 DEFINED**

In early 2006, SOCSOUTH personnel sought to determine what exactly “distributive C2” meant to their operations. Staff officers concluded their definition to be “a flat, networked command and control architecture that incorporates multiple, tailored C2 nodes, facilitates rapid decision making, interagency coordination and proper resourcing of special operations forces operating over vast geographic areas in support of the RWOT.”<sup>51</sup>

Within SOCSOUTH’s definition, distributive C2 has the following characteristics:<sup>52</sup>

- Capable of conducting interagency coordination at regional and country team levels
- Able to interface at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.
- Emphasizes the local solution with commanders at forward locations with sufficient [command] authorities and resources to conduct operations.
- Have a small [logistics] footprint and the ability to operate with low visibility.
- Maximizes reach back to SOCSOUTH headquarters.
- Networked both vertically and horizontally to maximize intelligence sharing.
- Requires a regional focus.

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<sup>50</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization.”

<sup>51</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development.”

<sup>52</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development.”

- Conduct operations over long durations (traditional joint task force C2 configurations are not conducive to this).

## F. DISTRIBUTIVE C2 AT SOCSOUTH HEADQUARTERS

The implementation plan for the overall distributive C2 concept consists of two parts. The first aspect reorganizes the JOD from a functionally focused task organization to a regionally centered one. Previously, the various JOD sub-elements focused on functional issues such as air, maritime, or ground operations, to name a few (see Figure 7).

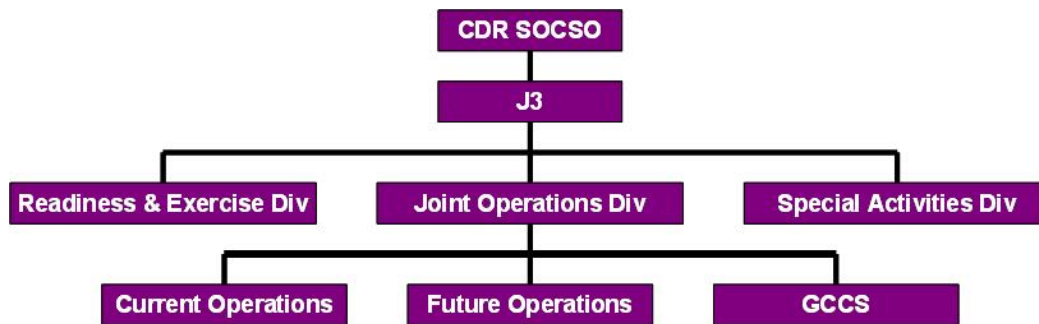


Figure 7. The Old J3 Directorate Task Organization

The nucleus of the new construct, however, is the creation of three Regional Engagement Branches (REBs), one for each sub-region. In addition to the three REBs, the JOD will also maintain a future operations cell, a personnel recovery cell, and a GCC support cell. The future operations cell will continue to conduct all near- and long-term planning, maintain all AOR-wide operational plans, and accomplish planning for civil affairs (CA) and psychological operations (PSYOPS) (See Figure 8).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization."

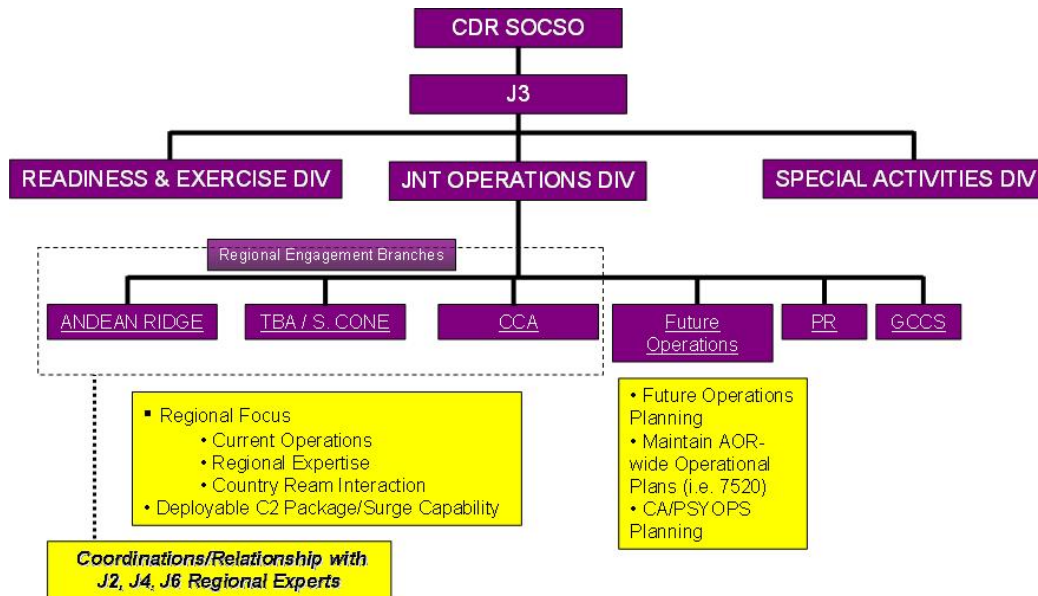


Figure 8. The New J3 Directorate Task Organization

The regional focus of each REB allows it to track current operations, gain regional expertise, and integrate into the country teams located within its sub-region. The REB can also serve as a deployable C2 package to surge into its sub-region to supplement existing SOCSOUTH command elements already in place. The REBs will also have the following capabilities:<sup>54</sup>

- Detailed tracking of current operations.
- Development and/or approval of operational concepts.
- Reception of mission in-briefs and out-briefs of deployed SOF in their sub-region.
- Coordination and scheduling of airlift assets.
- Coordination of SOF operations with other SOUTHCOM forces [in theater].
- Building and maintaining relationships with embassy country teams.
- Conduct and coordinate in-country assessments and VIP visits.

<sup>54</sup> Special Operations Command-South Joint Operations Division, “Configuring the TSOC to CS the RWOT,” PowerPoint Presentation, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, 2007.

- Providing support to SOCSOUTH intelligence assets.
- Coordinating and building relationships with regional experts located in the other [functional] sections of the SOCSOUTH staff.

## **G. DISTRIBUTIVE C2 BY SUB-REGION**

The second aspect for implementing SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 concept is centered on establishing forward deployed command and control nodes. These C2 nodes, or SOC Forwards (SOCFWDs), coordinate directly with each REB and oversee all SOF operations within its sub-region. To reiterate, one node, is dedicated to the Andean Ridge, one to the Southern Cone, and two smaller C2 cells to the Caribbean and Central America (one in each area). The SOCFWDs in the Andean Ridge and the Southern Cone are in the early stages of implementation, while the C2 cells in the CCA are still in the conceptual phase. For purposes of operational security, the location of these SOCFWDs may not be disclosed.

Each SOCFWD/C2 node is empowered with certain command authorities to streamline the execution of special operations. Specifically, the node synchronizes all missions with strategic objectives as determined by the commanding general. In addition to the ability to authorize and C2 operations, each C2 node will have the ability to provide some logistical support to its assigned SOF elements. Also, the SOCFWDs will have small intelligence and administrative capabilities and the authority to coordinate with the appropriate US Embassy or partner nation agencies for additional support needs. Lastly, each C2 element will possess the capability to send and receive communications through a variety of mediums twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.<sup>55</sup>

### **1. The Andean Ridge**

The first sub-region allocated a SOCFWD C2 node was the Andean Ridge. Currently, the AR node is dedicated to personnel recovery and high value target "snatch and grab" operations. However, at a time to be determined by SOCSOUTH's

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<sup>55</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, SOCSOUTH Headquarters, Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, on May 7, 2007. Based on operational security reasons, all interviews were conducted in confidentiality with the names of interviewees being withheld.

Commanding General, this node will transition operations to include the full scope of the Distributive C2 concept. Consequently, the AR C2 node will encompass all SOF elements operating within its sub-region. Additionally, the Andean Ridge SOCFWD will begin coordinating and synchronizing SOF operations with relevant US Embassy country team members, non-government organizations (NGOs), and PN agencies.<sup>56</sup>

When fully operational, the AR C2 node will have operational control of all SOF operating within its sub-region. This SOCFWD will be the focal point between the SOCSOUTH headquarters at Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) and SOF operating within the sub-region (see Figure 9). It will also maintain regional situational awareness, make assessments on partner nation capabilities, and support intelligence operations.<sup>57</sup>

Currently, this C2 node resides inside the US embassy compound of one of the countries in its sub-region. For force protection issues only, SOCFWD is under the tactical control of the Security Assistance Organization operating in that US Embassy and has a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with it for some minor administrative and logistical support.

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<sup>56</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 COA Development."

<sup>57</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization."



Figure 9. The Andean Ridge SOC Forward Concept

## 2. The Southern Cone

The second of these SOCFWD C2 nodes was established in the Southern Cone. This element's operations are currently focused on the Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. Once fully operational, this SOCFWD node will be

responsible for the command and control of all SOF operating with the Southern Cone sub-region. As with its Andean counterpart, this SOCFWD will also be responsible for the coordination and synchronization of all SO within its AOR.

When fully operational as a SOCFWD, this C2 node will also have operational control for all SOF operating within the SC. It will also be responsible for ensuring that all unconventional warfare shaping operations are nested and synchronized within the RWOT plan, maintaining regional situational awareness, and developing operational counters to Tri-Border threats (see Figure 10).<sup>58</sup>

As with its Andean Ridge counterpart, this C2 node also resides inside the US embassy compound of the one of the countries in its specific sub-region. A virtually identical agreement exists between the SOCFWD and the applicable Security Assistance Organization with regards to force protection and other levels of minor support.

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<sup>58</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, “SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization.”





Figure 10. The Southern Cone SOC Forward Concept

### 3. The Caribbean and Central America

While still in the conceptual phase, the SOCFWD structure for the Caribbean and Central American (CCA) area is unique. Within this sub-region there will be two smaller C2 cells reporting to the CCA REB at SOCSOUTH headquarters. One of these CCA C2 cells will operate inside the Caribbean while the other will be located on the mainland in Central America. Once moved from the conceptual to the operational phase, the task of these two C2 cells will be the same, namely the command and control of all SOF

operating within its AOR. Each will also be responsible for synchronizing and coordinating all special operations within its sub-region.<sup>59</sup>

The reason for having these two small C2 cells, as opposed to one larger SOCFWD, is the CCA's two distinct operating environments. While both support the overall task of drug interdiction, in Central America this objective is accomplished through the use of ground forces, while in the Caribbean this is achieved with maritime elements. Hence the two separate C2 cells.

Despite their smaller size, these C2 cells will still possess many of the same responsibilities and capabilities of the larger SOCFWDs. Each cell will have operational control of all SOF in its AOR, will maintain regional situational awareness, and develop operational concepts for interdiction operations (see Figure 11).<sup>60</sup>

Similar to the other two C2 nodes, SOCSOUTH intends for each of these C2 cells to also reside within a US Embassy compound in a country within its AO. As with the two SOCFWDs, these two CCA C2 cells will be under the tactical control of the applicable U.S. Embassy's Security Assistance Organization only with regards to force protection issues. Additionally, these cells will also maintain MOAs for minor administrative support.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization."

<sup>60</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization."

<sup>61</sup> SOCSOUTH JOD, "SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 JOD Reorganization."

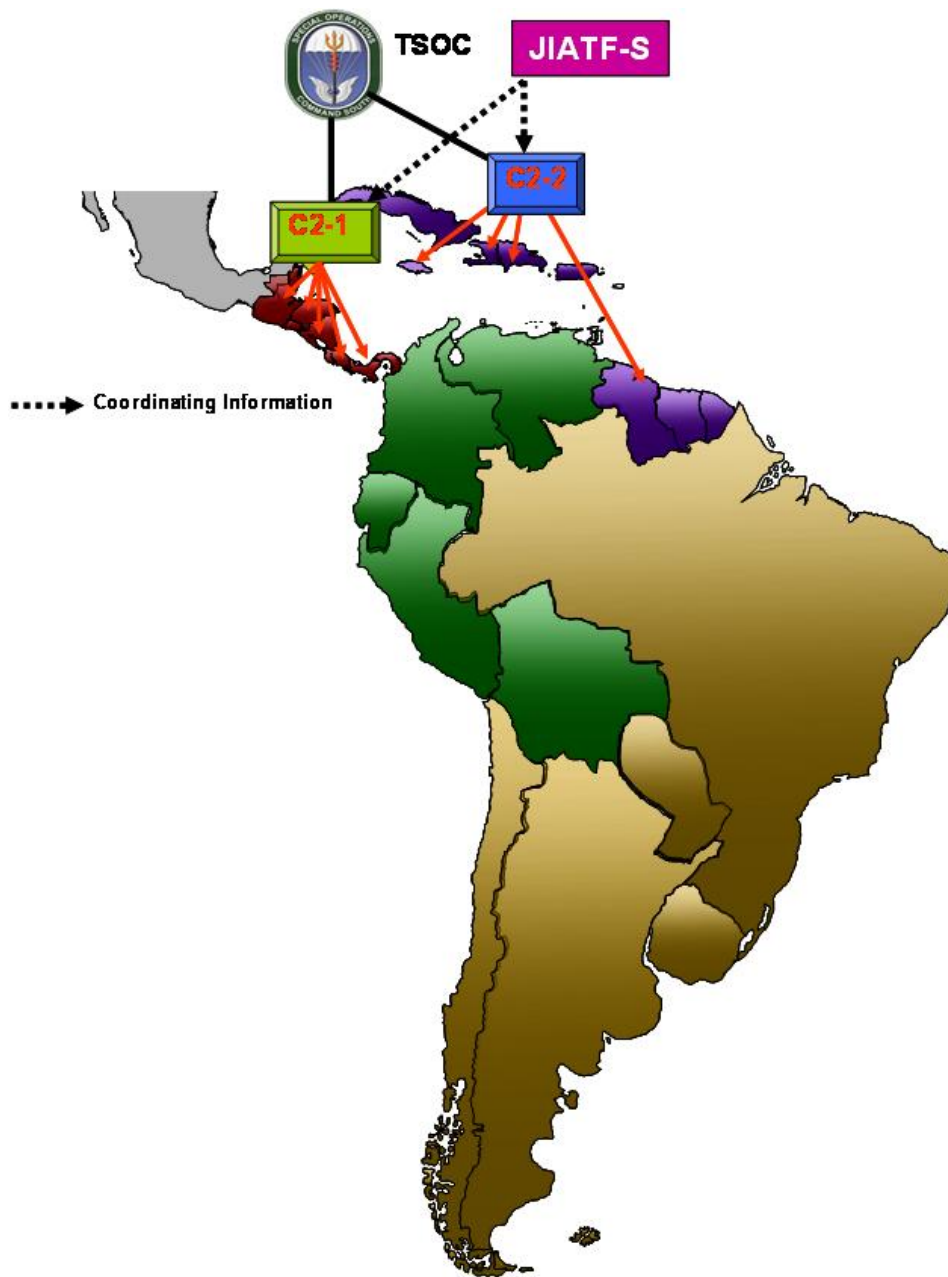


Figure 11. The CCA C2 Cell Concept

## H. REVIEW OF THE NEW OVERALL SOCSOUTH DISTRIBUTIVE C2 STRUCTURE

The overall Distributive C2 concept is an effort to acquire regional expertise, develop regional as opposed to task focus, and improve the speed at which tactical operations are planned, resourced, and authorized. As discussed previously, due to

cultural and political sensitivities, SOCSOUTH believes a regional orientation to be superior to a task organized one. As a result, the new C2 arrangements are the same or very similar but they allow different approaches to develop in each sub-region.

Additionally, rather than a multitude of SOF elements reporting up to the JOD for action, support, and assistance, this Distributive C2 concept attempts to push assets away from SOCSOUTH headquarters and into the actual theater of operations.

The chain of command and support now moves from the individual SOF element operating in a particular country to its sub-region's SOCFWD/C2 cell. The SOCFWD then reports to SOCSOUTH through their respective REB. As many issues as possible will be resolved at the C2 node level. This chain works in reverse for issues generated from the top-down (see Figure 12).

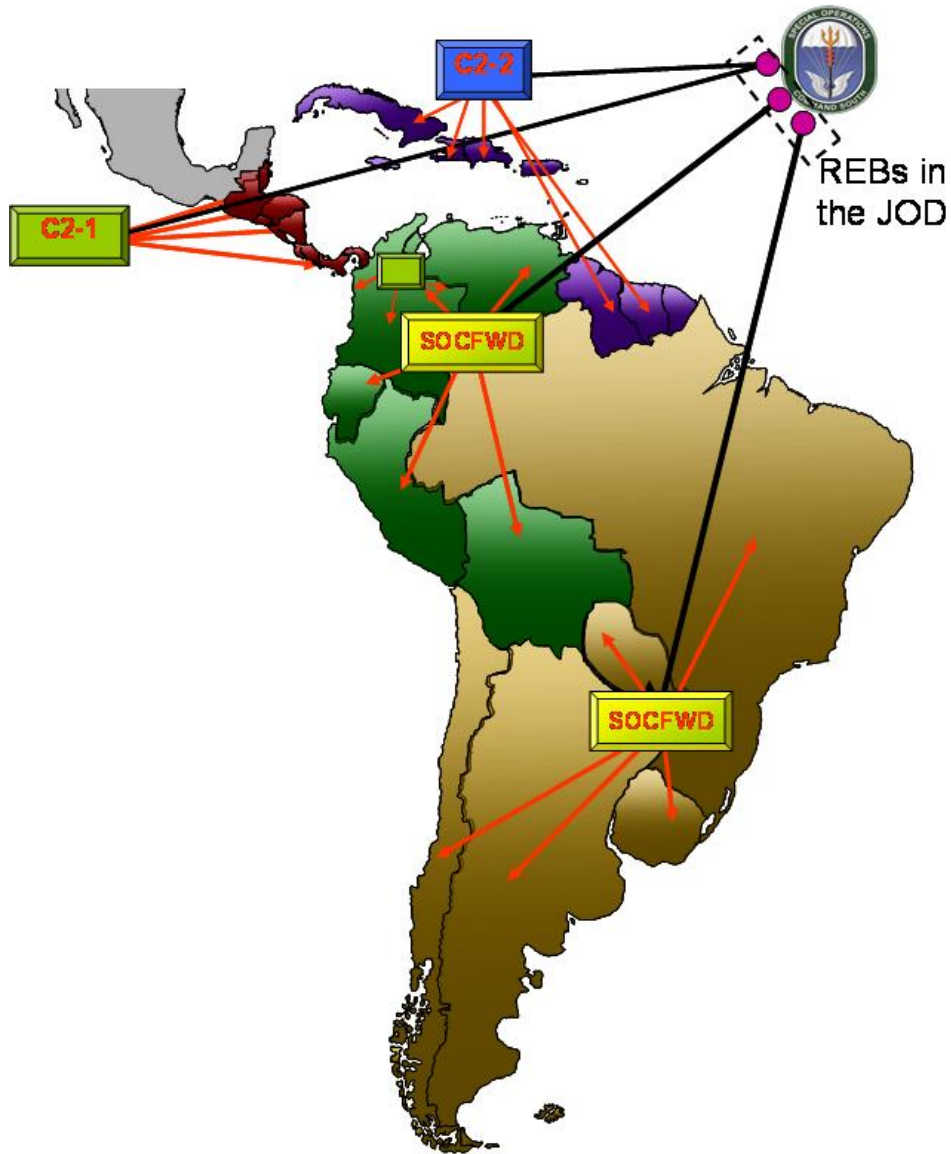


Figure 12. The SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 Concept

## I. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept. This chapter began with Brigadier General Cleveland's vision of what the C2 structure for the GWOT should be centered on. This vision was the catalyst for his Distributive C2 concept. After BG Cleveland's vision, the SOCSOUTH strategy for its RWOT was reviewed, followed by a description of the current SOCSOUTH C2 structure. This chapter then provided SOCSOUTH's refined definition of Distributive C2 and its

characteristics. Then the chapter detailed the task, purpose, and responsibilities for each of the two parts of this new concept: the establishment of REBs within the JOD and the creation of SOWFWDs/C2 nodes within each sub-region. This chapter concluded with a review of the end state for SOCSOUTH's fully operational C2 structure.

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## IV. SOCSOUTH C2 NODE IN THE ANDEAN RIDGE

How important it is to take scraps of seemingly disparate information from widely different locations, piece them together, work them in a timely way, and then be poised, cocked, and ready to move in a matter of minutes or hours, not days or weeks, because time-sensitive targets don't wait.<sup>62</sup>

Secretary of Defense Donald  
Rumsfeld, in reference to the capture  
of Saddam Hussein

### A. INTRODUCTION

Although operationally still in its infancy, the Andean Ridge C2 node is the linchpin of SOCSOUTH's initial distributive C2 endeavor. This sub-region includes the countries of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. As previously discussed, it is a vital area of operations because, among other things "[v]irtually all of the Andean Ridge nations are suffering from one or more of the multifaceted threats of drug trafficking, insurgency, paramilitary violence, kidnapping, and common crime."<sup>63</sup> As evidenced by long term programs such as the \$1.3B Plan Colombia<sup>64</sup> and the \$782M Andean Ridge Initiative,<sup>65</sup> South America's Andean Ridge plays a substantial role in the U.S. National Security Strategy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Rowan Scarborough, *Rumsfeld's War: The Untold Story of America's Anti-Terrorist Commander* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2004), 62.

<sup>63</sup> William Spracher, "The Andean Ridge: The Perfect Training Lab for Latin American FAOs," *Foreign Affairs Officer Association Journal* (August 2005), <http://faoa.org/journal/andeanr.html> (accessed August 17, 2007).

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Support for Plan Colombia*. Prepared by the Embassy of the United States, Bogotá, Colombia, date unknown. [https://colombia.cms3.getusinfo.com/topics\\_of\\_interest/plan-colombia-full-text-documents/toipc\\_002.html](https://colombia.cms3.getusinfo.com/topics_of_interest/plan-colombia-full-text-documents/toipc_002.html) (accessed August 21, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Andean Regional Initiative*, Prepared by the Embassy of the United States, Bogotá, Colombia, March 23, 2002, [https://colombia.cms3.getusinfo.com/topics\\_of\\_interest/plan-colombia-press-bulletins/toipc230302.html](https://colombia.cms3.getusinfo.com/topics_of_interest/plan-colombia-press-bulletins/toipc230302.html) (accessed August 21, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> President George Bush, "Work with others to Defuse Regional Conflicts," *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Section 4, September 17, 2002, <http://whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss4.html> (accessed August 23, 2007).



This chapter describes SOCSOUTH's initial steps with regards to establishing a SOCFWD command and control node in the Andean Ridge. The chapter also provides additional considerations for full implementation of the Andean Ridge C2 node. It concludes with the impact of the node thus far on subordinate units, U.S. Embassy country team members, and partner nation counterparts.

## **B. SOCSOUTH'S INITIAL STEPS FOR ITS ANDEAN RIDGE C2 NODE**

While the Andean Ridge C2 node is far from being fully operational, SOCSOUTH is taking measured steps to establish its staff presence there. Currently four of the standard military staff functions reside within the Andean C2 node. The bulk of these personnel function from within the operations cell (J3), with intelligence (J2), logistics (J4), and communications (J6) staff officers providing less of a presence.<sup>67</sup> None of these personnel are permanently assigned to the US Embassy but rather on temporary assignment from SOCSOUTH Headquarters. In contrast, its Embassy country team counterparts are typically assigned permanently for two year tours. The entire node is commanded by an officer in the grade of O-6 which is appropriate due to scope of the Andean Ridge operation and is on par with conventional DoD counterparts within the Embassy. The SOCFWD chief is also assigned a deputy chief and a noncommissioned officer in charge.

### **1. Manning Levels**

As with any new process, SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 concept is not without its challenges. With regards to the Andean Ridge node, manpower levels are a primary concern for operations there. In personal interviews, the node's current leadership estimates that there are about half of the staff officers on station required to expand the Distributive C2 concept beyond the borders of the partner nation and truly assume regional responsibilities. Among the staff functions expected to increase manning levels

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<sup>67</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 30, 2007. Based on operational security reasons, all interviews were conducted in confidentiality with the names and specific locations of interviewees being withheld.

are intelligence, operations, logistics, and communications personnel.<sup>68</sup> To its credit SOCSOUTH appears to be taking very aggressive, proactive measures to mitigate these manning concerns for the future.

## **2. Permanent Party Status for Node Leadership**

An item for further consideration by SOCSOUTH Headquarters is assigning the node's commander and deputy commander to the U.S. Embassy on a permanent basis. Unlike the other DoD components at the Embassy, the leadership of SOCSOUTH's Andean C2 node is on temporary assignment. Currently tour lengths for node leadership vary anywhere from four to eight months.<sup>69</sup> According to the SOCFWD's leadership, currently there are no plans to change existing practices by assigning personnel permanently.<sup>70</sup> Through the course of other interviews some personnel believed that this lack of continuity in node leadership is disruptive to relations with SOCSOUTH's subordinate units as well as with the other DoD elements at the Embassy.<sup>71</sup> Each new incoming node commander brings with him his own management style, expectations, and interpretation of the CG's intent and guidance.

This assessment has merit and bears further investigation by SOCSOUTH. A possible solution is to make those two leadership billets staggered, two year tours. This arrangement has the potential to mitigate simultaneous reassignment of the node's leadership. The existing Status of Forces Agreement with the partner nation may possibly derail efforts of this nature, however.

## **3. Assigning a Contracting Officer to the Node**

As the Andean Ridge C2 node grows ever more robust, the addition of a contracting officer in the logistics cell may be warranted. Depending on the type of administrative or logistical support required, subordinate elements collocated with the Andean SOCFWD must either process requests through the DoD's Security Assistance

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<sup>68</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>69</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>70</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>71</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 30, 2007.

Organization (SAO) on site, SOCSOUTH Headquarters in Miami, or its parent unit in the United States.<sup>72</sup> While a warranted contracting officer won't serve as the "be all and end all" it has the potential to streamline, and subsequently hasten, support to SOCSOUTH's tactical elements.

#### **4. Additional Workspace**

Furthermore, additional manpower at the Andean Ridge C2 node will require additional workspace. Even with its current complement of personnel, the entire node does not share the same office space. This may lead to "disconnects" with regards to maintaining a unified strategic direction within the node. It is recommended that SOCSOUTH personnel continue to lobby for more space in or around the Embassy grounds.

#### **5. Air Assets**

Additionally, augmenting the Andean Ridge SOCFWD with special operations air assets in theater has the potential to dramatically increase the response time and operational effectiveness of operations of a time sensitive nature. Not since the MH-60Ds of Company D, 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) departed Puerto Rico's Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in 2003 has SOCSOUTH had a SOF air component permanently stationed in its area of operations.<sup>73</sup> Existing SOCSOUTH leadership at the Andean node identified benefits to the permanent presence of SOF fixed wing assets such as MC-130s and AC-130 gunships, as well as, for the return of rotary wing aircraft.<sup>74</sup> For sake of comparison, SOCSOUTH's counterparts in U.S. European (USEUCOM) and Pacific Commands (USPACOM) both possess a permanently assigned squadron each of MC-130H Combat Talon II and MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft to

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<sup>72</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 30, 2007.

<sup>73</sup> U.S. Army Special Operations Command, "Special Ops aviation unit traverses Bermuda Triangle en route to new home", *News Service Release Number 03082525* (August 2003), <http://news.soc.mil/releases/News%20Archive/2003/03AUG/030825-01.htm> (accessed August 22, 2007).

<sup>74</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

their area of operations.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, USEUCOM has the added benefit of the venerable MH-53J/M Pave Low heavy lift helicopter for the insertion and extraction of special operations personnel.<sup>76</sup> These units are under the operational control of their respective theater special operations commands.<sup>77</sup>

## **6. Integration into the Embassy Country Team**

The final ingredients for successful implementation of SOCSOUTH's Andean Ridge C2 node are a strategic communications plan and a formal agreement for integration of SOCSOUTH element personnel into the U.S. Embassy country team. Currently, SOCSOUTH's forward operations there are seen as a "ghost organization" throughout the Embassy population as a whole.<sup>78</sup> The successes thus far have largely been personality driven since no mechanism exists to establish formal lines of coordination or integration with the rest of the Embassy's country team. This communications plan may provide the Embassy's leadership with a better understanding of the SOCFWD's roles and responsibilities. At this time, the Ambassador and Charge'd'Affaires view SOCSOUTH's C2 node as a subordinate element of the DoD's Security Assistance element at the Embassy.<sup>79</sup> As a result, the node's leadership is excluded from many meetings and discussions pertinent to their operations. For example, the node's leadership is not invited to the daily country team brief.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the node chief used to chair a meeting which focused on targeting. Unfortunately, that has now morphed in a weekly current events meeting led by the SAO.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command Fact Sheet, "352nd Special Operations Group," The U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command, <http://www2.afsoc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=224> (accessed September 7, 2007).

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, "352nd Special Operations Group."

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, "353rd Special Operations Group."

<sup>78</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 30-31, 2007.

<sup>79</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>80</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>81</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

## **7. Impact to Subordinate Units**

Naturally, SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept in the Andean Ridge node has impacted its subordinate elements. During personal interviews with these tactical units, members claimed that SOCSOUTH's forward presence has positively influenced the speed of command and control.<sup>82</sup> Under the previous construct, timely response was often hampered by factors such as time zone differences, waiting for email replies or return phone calls. With the new concept, subordinate units benefit from being collocated with SOCSOUTH's C2 node. Consequently, many of the communication barriers have been significantly reduced.

Additionally, being collocated with the SOCSOUTH C2 node provides another intangible benefit to subordinate elements in theater. As a result of having a SOCSOUTH C2 node there in country, the sub-element now has "top cover" at the Embassy. The leader of the subordinate unit can now route administrative requests through the forward located SOCSOUTH staff. The C2 node's leadership can in turn pursue resolution through the Defense Attaché or SAO as applicable, since leadership of all three of those DoD elements are of equal rank.

With SOCSOUTH championing the appropriate administrative tasks, the leadership of the collocated subordinate unit is free to focus almost exclusively on the tactical aspects of its assigned missions.

## **C. CONCLUSION**

With regards to the Andean Ridge node, SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept appears to be bearing some fruit. While not a perfect solution, this initiative does indeed build a better mousetrap. By partitioning its area of responsibility and assigning staff personnel to these particular regions, SOCSOUTH aims to cultivate action officers more in tune with regional intricacies. Although an improved method for mitigating Andean crises, Distributed C2 is unlikely to produce personnel that are more than marginally attuned to their region's pulse. This, however, is largely unavoidable due to the military assignment process. The vast majority of SOCSOUTH headquarters consists of active

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<sup>82</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 30, 2007.

duty military personnel, who will typically be transferred to a different duty station anywhere from two to four years after arrival at SOCSOUTH. Perhaps a viable option would be to hire a handful of government contractors to ensure continuity within the regional engagement branches at SOCSOUTH headquarters.

According to personnel in the node, SOCSOUTH's forward presence has also substantially improved coordination with their partner nation counterparts. This has largely been accomplished through several weekly face to face meetings.<sup>83</sup> As detailed above, the same is true for coordination between SOCSOUTH's Andean Ridge node and its subordinate elements. Additionally, SOCSOUTH's intelligence personnel are fully integrated into the Embassy's intelligence fusion cell, ensuring appropriate horizontal coordination at the intelligence analyst level.

A word of caution is necessary here, however. While SOCSOUTH's tactical units in country and partner nations both benefit from this new arrangement that may not hold true throughout the sub-region. The current levels of improved coordination and increased cooperation stem largely from these organizations being located in close proximity to the SOCFWD. It is unlikely that other countries within the region will exhibit the same benefits from the presence of the C2 node. This is because SOCSOUTH personnel assigned to the Andean C2 node will not be able to walk across the Embassy grounds or drive across town to meet with its other SOF partners within the sub-region. The same geographic separation remains with other countries within the sub-region regardless of whether SOCSOUTH personnel are back at their Miami headquarters location or at the Andean C2 node. Therefore, this lack of interaction may not pay the same dividends as it would in the nation the node is located in. For this reason it is imperative that SOCSOUTH establish its C2 presence in areas most likely to gain from its presence.

An option to remedy the lack of a SOCSOUTH C2 node in every country within the sub-region is through the use of liaison officers (LNOs). A single SOCSOUTH LNO collocated within the other U.S. Embassies within the region provides for a constant presence. This arrangement would allow SOCSOUTH to keep its finger on the pulse of the partner nation by allowing an LNO to interact with subordinate units, the applicable

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<sup>83</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Andean Ridge Sub-region, on July 31, 2007.

Embassy country team, and also with partner nation counterparts. The added benefit of this arrangement is that SOCSOUTH will already have a liaison in place should a crisis erupt in a country outside of regional C2 node. This increases the potential for improved coordination between all stakeholders in that particular country.

In summary, SOCSOUTH's initial steps for establishing a C2 node in the Andean Ridge are promising. Further strides will occur once the node's manning becomes more robust and the U.S. Embassy's leadership gains a better understanding of SOCSOUTH's role in the Andean Ridge.

## V. SOCSOUTH C2 NODE IN THE SOUTHERN CONE

Islamic terrorist groups with a presence in the TBA [Tri-Border Area] reportedly include Egypt's Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) and Al-Jihad (Islamic Jihad), al Qaeda, Hamas, Hizballah, and al-Muqawamah (the Resistance; also spelled al-Moqawama), which is a pro-Iran wing of the Lebanon-based Hizballah. Islamic terrorist groups have used the TBA for fund-raising, drug trafficking, money laundering, plotting, and other activities in support of their organizations. The large Arab community in the TBA is highly conducive to the establishment of sleeper cells of Islamic terrorists, including Hizballah and al Qaeda.<sup>84</sup>

Report from the Federal Research  
Division on Terrorist and Organized  
Crime Groups in South America

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Southern Cone (SC) region of South America includes Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay. SOCSOUTH's strategy for this region as it applies to the war on terror is to disrupt and deter terrorist networks that may be using the Tri-Border Area (TBA). The TBA, an area encompassing parts of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, currently serves as a financial hub for smuggling and criminal activity. As detailed during a recent visit to a U.S. Embassy in the TBA, there are millions of U.S. dollars generated by illegal activities that leave the region annually. It has proven difficult to track where the money is going.<sup>85</sup>

One of the biggest problems facing this particular embassy's country team is corruption within the partner nation infrastructure. The U.S. ambassador here is devoted to focusing his team on this issue through a layered approach of political, economic, and military aid. The legal attaché and political advisor work closely with members of partner nation's (PN) legislative branch in order to influence legislative action for

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<sup>84</sup> Rex Hudson, *Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America* (Washington: Library of Congress, 2003), 1.

<sup>85</sup> Statement made by the U.S. Ambassador (country undisclosed) during a morning meeting on August 22, 2007.



detering corruption. Furthermore, the Embassy's Security Assistance Office (SAO) actively engages the PN military to strengthen its defense posture while the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Regional Security Officer (RSO) work with their counterparts to build the PN capacity through incentives to combat corruption. All these efforts aid internal security and stability for the Tri-Border Area which helps deny safe havens for international terrorist organizations.

SOC SOUTH's Southern Cone node commands and controls several lines of operations (LOOs) from the U.S. Embassy which support and enhance the partner nation special operations capacity and other interagency efforts ongoing through the country team. For example, one LOO may consist of a U.S. Army Special Forces team providing advanced training to a partner nation's SOF. This would be considered a "maneuver" LOO. Another LOO could be all intelligence gathering operations not directly associated with the maneuver LOO. Regardless, all LOOs must be synchronized towards a common strategic goal for the sub-region.

Prior to SOC SOUTH establishing its C2 element in the Southern Cone, all special operations in the region generally were conducted independently of each other. They were synchronized to some degree within SOC SOUTH's J3 Directorate at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida. Within country, operations were always within the cognizance of the head of the SAO, a U.S. Army Colonel, but never managed by him. The SAOs serve as the U.S. Ambassador's primary military advisor. However, the overwhelming majority of SAO chiefs have little experience in commanding or controlling SOF operations. Typically the SAO only interact with deployed SOF units in order to deconflict problems.

In addition to synchronizing all SOF in-country operations, the J3 also had to contend with frequent additional taskings from USSOUTHCOM, further complicating this arrangement for the J3. When such taskings did arise, the J3 would respond with whatever personnel were available. This is what SOC SOUTH referred to as swarming a problem or "swarmball."

Previously, the J3 was broken down into functional components such as, current, future, and maritime operations. Typically, the J3 staff would have some personnel

deployed to several U.S. embassies throughout the theater in support of ongoing operations. Thus, in many cases, the J3 would not have its full complement of staff officers at headquarters to fulfill their daily roles. This required “cross-pollinization” of personnel from different elements of the J3. The end result was diminished situational awareness and continuity throughout the J3. According to senior personnel at SOCSOUTH, this ad hoc method of functioning was particularly difficult to manage.

To remedy this, SOCSOUTH placed a C2 element from its J3 staff at a U.S. Embassy<sup>86</sup> in the TBA. Additionally, SOCSOUTH rearranged its J3 in order to suit this regional split by creating Regional Engagement Branches (REBs) in its J3 to support its associated C2 node in each of the three sub-regions within the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

## **B. SOCSOUTH’S INITIAL STEPS FOR ITS SOUTHERN CONE C2 NODE**

The Southern Cone C2 node, also known as special operations command-forward (SOCFWD), began as a small cell of personnel commanded by a U.S. Army O-6. The node’s charter was to establish coordination between special operations and the U.S. Embassy country team. In this capacity the SOCFWD also provides the country team with a conduit to SOF and vice versa.

With a single C2 node in the Southern Cone, SOCSOUTH’s concept is still very much a work in progress in terms of controlling the entire sub-region. The future intent for SOCSOUTH’s distributive C2 is to command and control cross-border operations throughout the Southern Cone. As SOCSOUTH’s presence matures in the TBA, the potential for influence will expand to other Southern Cone countries. This will truly impact SOCSOUTH’s comprehensive regional strategy by placing SOCSOUTH staff officers throughout the sub-regions in order to maintain a finger on the pulse of their assigned country. The following is a report of observations resulting from recent site visits and interviews at SOCSOUTH’s SOCFWD in the SC.

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<sup>86</sup> For operational security purposes, this thesis will not disclose exact locations of special operations forces nor discuss any details regarding their operations.

## **1. Selection of Node Leadership**

SOC SOUTH's selection of a Colonel to lead the efforts to establish its C2 element in the TBA was based on several factors<sup>87</sup>. First, the SAO at the embassy is a U.S. Army Colonel and thus SOC SOUTH's C2 node chief would be of commensurate rank for conflict resolution situations. Additionally, the presence of a Colonel as opposed to a Lieutenant Colonel is a political demonstration of commitment by SOC SOUTH to the PN military commanders.

While valid for SOC SOUTH's C2 node in the Andean Ridge, these reasons do not seem to apply for the Southern Cone. The U.S. Embassy in the TBA is substantially smaller than the one observed in the Andean Ridge and subsequently has fewer personnel. The internal political environment at the embassy is also very different. The interpersonal relationships between members of the Department of State (DoS), DEA, SAO, Defense Attaché Office, and SOC SOUTH C2 element appear to be more closely knit. The SC node leadership participates in the daily country team meetings and is the special operations voice to the ambassador. In contrast, this arrangement does not occur in the Andean Ridge node because the chief of mission there wants a single point of contact for all U.S. Defense Department matters. That is the ambassador's prerogative but does play a role in the working relationship between the SOC SOUTH C2 element and the rest of the country team. If SOC SOUTH's node is invisible to the rest of the country team then, consequently, interagency personnel will not understand who SOF is, what SOF does, and how SOF can enhance the overall mission.

The initial SC C2 node chief, a full Colonel, did not possess the necessary interpersonal skills required to interact with non-DoD personnel across the interagency. This factor placed constraints on SOC SOUTH's ability to fully integrate its presence into concurrent interagency operations. Forging enduring relationships is the basis for building trust with interagency partners at U.S. Embassies. After six months, which is the normal rotation duration for the C2 element, SOC SOUTH replaced the initial SC node chief with a Lieutenant Colonel (O-5). The decision to select an O-5 as the C2 chief

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<sup>87</sup> There may have been other factors, however, these were the two mentioned during a personal interview conducted with SOC SOUTH C2 node commander on August 22, 2007.

was appropriate because interpersonal skills were more important than military rank. A leader's ability to socially connect with a wide range of personnel from the interagency to non-government organizations and who has sufficient experience in special operations is more important than rank in the TBA. According to the incumbent C2 element chief, "the right O-4 (Major or Lieutenant Commander) can do this job."<sup>88</sup>

## **2. Interagency Education and Awareness**

The SOCSOUTH C2 element works with a variety of personnel from other government agencies who, in most cases, don't fully understand SOF's role in the greater mission. It is therefore incumbent upon the all of SOCSOUTH's nodes to educate interagency colleagues on the role of their C2 element and specifically how special operations forces can enhance their operations. However, in order for the node chief to do this effectively, he must understand how the interagency operates and interacts at the country team level. The C2 element's leadership should understand the roles and responsibilities of the Legal Attaché, Political Advisor, Economic Advisor, Defense Attaché Officer, and a host of other entities that combine to support the U.S. Ambassador. A SOCSOUTH C2 element with a good understanding of these roles and responsibilities can communicate more effectively with the host country team, thus facilitating a smoother transition for integration of SOF operations.

Thus far, the only formal DoD interagency awareness training available to SOF personnel is a four and a half day course<sup>89</sup> at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) in Hurlburt Field, Florida. Unfortunately, current demand for the course appears low, with only three offerings in FY08<sup>90</sup>. Excepting the JSOU course, there is no training mechanism for SOCSOUTH personnel to receive this type of education from the DoD. Consequently, they must learn it through on-the-job training (OJT), while performing their normal tasks. This places a burden on the C2 node's ability to make a

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<sup>88</sup> SOCSOUTH personnel, interview by authors, Southern Cone Sub-region, on August 22, 2007.

<sup>89</sup> JSOU offers a 4.5 day course called "SOF Interagency Collaboration Course."

<sup>90</sup> JSOU course offerings, [https://jsoupublic.socom.mil/schedule/by\\_course.php?req\\_course=SOFIACC](https://jsoupublic.socom.mil/schedule/by_course.php?req_course=SOFIACC) (accessed September 20, 2007).

smooth transition during a turnover of personnel. Furthermore, if the new commander isn't proactive he may never fully understand his role in the overall mission of the country team.

### **3. Speed, Flexibility, Integration, and Innovation**

The current C2 element in the Southern Cone manages over three lines of operations which support both the partner nation military and multiple interagency efforts. Prior to placing a C2 element at the embassy, these lines of operations were managed by the J3 at SOCSOUTH Headquarters. However, through this arrangement, the J3 lacked any visibility into daily operations gained simply by residing at the U.S. Embassy. Consequently, the Operations Directorate could not guide its operations as precisely. By placing a SOF C2 element within the embassy, SOCSOUTH is better attuned to local issues that arise and can adjust its operations to improve support to interagency efforts. During a recent visit to the TBA, the authors observed SOCSOUTH's node chief personally interact on several occasions with member of the country team. Without this communication, opportunities for proper employment of SOF might have been squandered. This persistent presence in the Embassy helps develop the confidence necessary for successful integration into the country team.

By having a SOF C2 element within the embassy, SOCSOUTH is more responsive to local issues. Several issues that arise during the daily country team meeting which may affect SOF operators in the field. For example, such an issue could be a security advisory issued by the ambassador which has implications for SOCSOUTH's subordinate elements operating throughout the country. Due to the distributive C2 concept, the node is able to immediately communicate any issues, concerns, or warnings to subordinates in the field. Additionally, SOF C2 elements residing at the embassies provide value by ensuring faster response to taskings from higher headquarters or from requests by interagency partners at the embassy. This speed combined with the C2 element's ability to communicate with all the sub-region's SOF components and headquarters element is what gives SOCSOUTH the flexibility to adapt its organization to suit the realities of its environment.

Interpersonal relationships, both informal and formal, are the hallmark of effective organizations. SOCSOUTH is no exception in this regard. In order to successfully execute its disruption strategy in the TBA, SOCSOUTH must leverage relationships and capabilities of other U.S. organizations in the country team. During one recent observation, the SOF C2 node chief conducted a meeting with its PN SOF counterparts. At this particular meeting, node leadership realized that some of the PN SOF officers were still working on the PN Army headquarters staff. This job responsibility was in addition to filling their roles as the newly appointed SOF commanders. These PN officers were supposed to be dedicated to their SOF unit and therefore not committed to any other duties. To remedy this, the SOCFWD node chief worked with the SAO Colonel to leverage his relationship with the PN equivalent of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure resolution by the partner nation.

Another positive example of maintaining SOF presence was observed during a visit to the embassy by USSOCOM staff personnel. These officers had come to the Southern Cone in order to present the U.S. ambassador with a briefing concerning a particular special operations capability. The ambassador expressed a keen interest in the brief, as did other members of the country team. His primary question was how he would be able to utilize this capability. The Chief of Mission was reminded that his SOCSOUTH C2 element would be able to facilitate his special operations requirements. As the USSOCOM briefer continued, it became readily apparent to the rest of the country team that SOF had a capability that could be applied to its own operations. With this epiphany, members of the interagency offered ideas about how these capabilities could enhance ongoing operations. This brainstorming is a clear example of how SOF integration into an Embassy's country team can inspire innovation throughout.

Had the SOF element not been assigned to the embassy on a semi-permanent basis, the ambassador would have to submit SOF requirements to the SAO. Since there is no institutional communication channel between the SAO and USSOCOM this process has the potential to take too long or garble the requirements. A time sensitive mission may suffer as a result.

Distributed C2 in the TBA allows SOCSOUTH to achieve integration into the interagency process, stimulate innovation, and accomplish better synchronization and coordination of operations occurring in the TBA.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

A common theme echoed by many of SOCSOUTH's leaders is that working with the interagency revolves around relationships. For SOCSOUTH, the TBA is no exception. This aspect of interagency partnerships should be considered as criteria when selecting leadership personnel for the C2 node. The authors' understand that it is difficult to screen for traits such as social adeptness and interpersonal skills, as these are not tangibles that can be gleaned from a questionnaire or even personal interviews. However, it is an important element that must not be overlooked when deciding which personnel to assign to these C2 nodes. Ideally, the incumbent SOF C2 element chief should have the most influence in selecting his replacement since he knows the social environment best.

Although not fully operational, SOCSOUTH's Distributive C2 concept has already proven its worth in the TBA of the Southern Cone. According to node personnel, synchronization of operations has improved and new PN capabilities are already being developed. This would not be possible to the extent it is today without a SOF chief at the embassy coordinating action. SOCSOUTH should continue to maintain its C2 element at the U.S. Embassy in the Southern Cone and should plan to expand that effort by placing more C2 elements at the embassies where SOF operations can expand in order to support the regional strategy for the TBA. These SOCSOUTH personnel would operate as SOF liaison officers (LNOs) and would report directly to the C2 node for the sub-region.

As this effort expands, the need for SOF education in interagency operations will remain an ongoing effort. As a temporary solution, SOCSOUTH should coordinate with the Department of State or Joint Special Operations University to facilitate mobile training teams to SOCSOUTH with tailored curriculums that address this training requirement. This training should occur on a regular basis until JSOU can accommodate more students.

Operations ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) have been the focal point of the GWOT thus far. This has resulted in obvious negative consequences on the rotation of SOF into USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility because of the operational tempo at USCENTCOM. Forces that were normally allocated to support SOCSOUTH operations are now sharing the burden in USCENTCOM's region. To assist with day to day operations, SOCSOUTH Headquarters was recently augmented by a 30-member U.S. Army Reserve team. Unfortunately, these individuals are scheduled to be demobilized by the end of FY2007 and will subsequently return to their civilian jobs. These personnel have allowed SOCSOUTH some flexibility in designing their C2 nodes and REBs. Once these reservists redeploy, the REBs and C2 nodes will have to adjust to the loss of these personnel. This research takes into consideration that SOCSOUTH has limited personnel to place at other U.S. embassies for the current timeframe. However, for the purpose of future manpower studies, this issue could justify the requirement for more mid grade level officers at SOCSOUTH's Joint Operations Division (JOD).

SOCSOUTH has taken great strides towards solving an internal organizational problem by rearranging the Operations Directorate into regionally oriented support staffs and by placing its J3 personnel closer to the operating environment. Though, in its preliminary stages, the initiative in the TBA has been successful in the opinion of personnel assigned there. However, in order to fully integrate the SOCSOUTH regional war on terrorism strategy with the distributive C2 construct, SOCSOUTH must look deeper into the planning phase in order to provide a long range vision and adjust development accordingly. Recent observations seem to indicate that SOF LNOs would help realize a broader network of SOF experts embedded at the embassies across the region.

Another facet of designing the long-range vision is how SOCSOUTH's forward deployed C2 nodes will communicate with their LNOs within the sub-regions, as well as, how the nodes communicate with each other. An institutionalized communications plan will be necessary for information to flow continuously between all SOF elements in the field.



Conditions for this construct have been established in one country in the Southern Cone thus far. Once the opportunity for entry into a neighboring country presents itself, SOCSOUTH must be poised with a plan to execute the vision. These plans would likely come from the J5 representative within each REB and approved by the SOCSOUTH Commander.

## **VI. A DISCUSSION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN**

The overarching vision, endorsed by the Intelligence Community's Executive Committee is to integrate the enterprise and enable cross-organizational collaboration against critical mission areas.<sup>91</sup>

Office of the Director of National  
Intelligence

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In order to analyze Special Operations Command-South's (SOC SOUTH) distributive command and control (C2) concept, this chapter provides a framework for assessing its organizational design within the confines of accepted definitions and organizing principles. This chapter provides a general framework and discussion for any theater special operations commander to apply to his particular organization given any set of problems he may encounter with regards to working with the interagency and accomplishing SOF objectives in ambiguous environments.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

As discussed in previous chapters SOC SOUTH has determined that its organizational design could no longer keep pace with the realities of the information age. It has reorganized in order to improve regional knowledge among its staff officers, push decision-making authority closer to subordinate units, and become more responsive to taskings from USSOUTHCOM.

### **C. MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL**

One lesson that the U.S. government learned from 9/11 was that several of its institutional organizations and accompanying doctrines were not adequately aligned to

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<sup>91</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *The United States Intelligence Community 100 Day Plan, Integration and Collaboration, Follow-up Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 27, 2007), 1.

deal with the issue of transnational terrorism. American military doctrine shapes conventional understanding of how U.S. forces should conceptualize terms such as command and control. However, there are many ways to approach these terms and apply them appropriately to a given set of circumstances. A close review of U.S. military joint doctrine publications will reveal that its content is written from the perspective of dealing with combat environments whereby maneuver operations are target-centric. Terms such as “objective” are meant to explicitly define a known enemy location, stronghold, C2 node, etc. In contrast, in environments that do not display characteristics of open and direct combat an objective can become vague and difficult to define. An example of such an objective is that of a “hearts and minds” campaign in a counter insurgency, where the target is the population of an entire village or city.

In order to deal with these types of environments, U.S. military joint doctrine must redefine command and control in order to suit the full range of military operations.

According to Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, command and control is defined as

The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission. Also called C2.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) defines command as “the exercise of authority” and control as “the continuous flow of information about the unfolding situation returning to the commander-which allows the commander to adjust

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<sup>92</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 12, 2001 (as amended through June 13, 2007)), 108.

and modify command action as needed.”<sup>93</sup> Marine Corps doctrine continues by describing C2 as “an interactive process involving all the parts of the system and working in all directions.”<sup>94</sup>

Conducting command and control in combat environments is very different from performing it in non-combat environments. One of the major differences between the two environments is the issue of “the objective.” The mission objective will determine many aspects of the C2 structure. The Joint Publication 1-02 definition of C2 is well suited for the combat environment where objectives are clear and the USMC definition is better suited for counterinsurgency and non-combat environments, where the objectives are more ambivalent.

In standard military maneuver operations where missions such as “attack that position,” are clearly defined, the Joint Publication 1-02 definition of C2 is sufficient. However, in an ambiguous environment where SOF often operates, the mission (e.g., plan and execute UW) is not as clearly defined. As a result, a special operator in the field must be able to operate with maximum authority, flexibility, and agility to respond to immediate changes emerging from dynamic situations. The USMC definition reflects precisely how SOCSOUTH’s staff currently approaches C2 in its theater of operations. The Commanding General (CG) of SOCSOUTH has positioned senior personnel from his operations staff, or J3, within several U.S. Embassies in his area of responsibility. These individuals serve as leadership at these forward deployed C2 nodes. A primary goal of these nodes is to improve synergy between special operations and the rest of the embassy country team by being on hand to coordinate and deconflict operations in country.

In doing this, SOCSOUTH’s commander shares general strategic direction with his C2 node chiefs while also divesting some of his authority in order to provide the flexibility needed to operate in highly dynamic environments. These node chiefs in turn provide continuous operational updates to the CG, who provides course corrections as

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<sup>93</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, *MCDP 6: Command and Control Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 1996), 40.

<sup>94</sup> USMC, *MCDP 6*, 40.

necessary. The intermediary at SOCSOUTH headquarters between these nodes and the CG are the J3's Regional Engagement Branches (REBs). These headquarters-based elements consist of members from each functional staff directorate and provide staff support to each C2 node in its geographic sub-region.

Within a traditional hierarchy, command authority remains at the top of the pyramid and is delegated to subordinates only to the degree to which they can complete their specific tasks. If those tasks are repetitive, subordinates normally retain authority for the sake of efficiency. However, if the task is specific and non-repetitive then authority is usually only delegated on a temporary basis.

For a noncommissioned officer in charge of a squad of riflemen with orders to attack an enemy position, his delegated authority to direct his men as he sees fit is sufficient. However, once this task is accomplished, his command authority is terminated. In this type of scenario, he is left to await further orders from higher headquarters, where ultimate authority resides, before he can direct his men once again. Additionally, unlike a SOF operator in the field, a conventional squad leader is generally a small cog in a much bigger machine. Consequently, an infantry squad leader does not require as much command authority since he will typically be working in conjunction with the rest of his platoon, company, battalion, etc. Due to their tendencies to work in smaller groups, SOF operators may very well be the senior U.S. military presence on the ground and therefore require greater command authorities. This is a classic example of C2 according to the Joint Pub 1-02 definition. However, this definition does not address the full spectrum of special operations in a non-combat theater where tasks are fluid and sometimes constrained by external political factors. One example of this is special operations intelligence gathering missions, which may conflict with concurrent Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations. While U.S. Code Title 50 governs some CIA authorities and Title 10 addresses DoD authorities, there remains a grey area between the two organizations with regards to some intelligence operations.

In contrast to the squad leader example, the mission becomes muddled in politics and ambiguity for a special operator ordered to conduct intelligence-gathering operations in a country where the partner nation government is not favorable to U.S. presence. In

this case, the operator must often navigate through carefully formed relationships in order to accomplish this task. Because SOF intelligence operations may run parallel to other USG intelligence operations, they must be managed through Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) and constant coordination. The same level of interagency synchronization is required for other special operations occurring in the country. This requires SOCSOUTH's C2 node chief to constantly interact with U.S. country team members, including the U.S. Ambassador and partner nation military leadership.

In *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, author Hy Rothstein identifies two types of command and control based on how they are structured to deal with uncertainty. The first type, "detailed C2"<sup>95</sup>, tries to maximize certainty for those in the chain of command and tends to be centralized and formal. Detailed C2 "emphasizes vertical, linear information flow."<sup>96</sup> The other type, which originates from Prussian Field Marshall Helmuth Von Moltke, is "mission C2". "Mission C2 tends to be decentralized, informal, and flexible."<sup>97</sup> Orders and plans are as brief and simple as possible, relying on subordinates to effect the necessary coordination and on the human capacity for implicit communication based on a mutual understanding of the requirements."<sup>98</sup> Mission C2 is utilized by SOCSOUTH at its C2 nodes at select U.S. Embassies within its area of responsibility. The key link between Rothstein's discussion and SOCSOUTH's operations is the reliance on subordinate commanders to effect true coordination and communication at the country team level.

The common denominator between mission C2, as described by Rothstein and the USMC definition of C2 is how information is employed to empower the field commander. The Joint Publication 1-02 definition does not place emphasis here but rather states that "command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in

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<sup>95</sup> Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and The Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 104.

<sup>96</sup> Rothstein, *Afghanistan and The Troubled Future of UW*, 104.

<sup>97</sup> Rothstein, *Afghanistan and The Troubled Future of UW*, 105.

<sup>98</sup> Rothstein, *Afghanistan and The Troubled Future of UW*, 104-105.

the accomplishment of the mission.”<sup>99</sup> The emphasis in this definition is on how resources are arranged rather than how resources interact. In SOCSOUTH’s distributive C2 concept, transferring information and knowledge is a vital part of the design due to the importance of interagency communication.

#### **D. BREAKING DOWN THE BOUNDARIES WITHIN THE HIERARCHY**

Prior to 9/11, SOCSOUTH’s role in South and Central America was to provide special operations capabilities to the commander of USSOUTHCOM. Previously, SOCSOUTH’s organizational structure was suited to managing the flow of SOF personnel into and out of the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Presently, in the wake of 9/11, SOCSOUTH’s role has expanded to not only providing a SOF capability to USSOUTHCOM, but also to plan and execute a regional strategy for the GWOT. This expanded role has placed a management burden on SOCSOUTH’s hierarchical organizational design.

Thus far, SOCSOUTH has determined that its difficulty in managing operations throughout an entire region is largely due to its organizational design. In addressing the management issues that SOCSOUTH has encountered with its recent role expansion, it is necessary to apply a different approach to its organizational structure.

In business management, a great deal of research is focused on redesigning industrial-aged hierarchies into new organizational forms that can better keep pace with the realities of the information age. One such study is in *The Boundaryless Organization*,<sup>100</sup> which provides a basic set of principles for how any traditional hierarchy can enhance its structure without completely overhauling its design. The book’s authors contend that traditional hierarchies typically base their success on size, role clarity, specialization, and control. The authors claim that those success factors are no longer relevant in the information age. They suggest that the new measures of success are speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> JCS, *JP 1-02*, 101.

<sup>100</sup> Ron Ashkenas, Todd Jick, Steve Kerr, and Dave Ulrich, *The Boundaryless Organization: Breaking the Chains of Organizational Structure* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

<sup>101</sup> Ashkenas, *The Boundaryless Organization*, 6.

In order to best apply these new measures of success factors in its distributive C2, SOCSOUTH must continue to place emphasis on the barriers inherent to its organizational design. The barriers these authors identify in hierarchical organizations are the vertical, horizontal, external, and geographic. As in most DoD organizations, SOCSOUTH faces these same boundaries, which challenge its organizational success. As with most military units, vertical boundaries exist between the unit commander at the top and the operators at the bottom of the organization.<sup>102</sup> Next, dividing lines between functional staff roles such as the J4 Logistics Directorate or J5 Future Plans Directorate are representative of horizontal boundaries.<sup>103</sup> External boundaries are those that exist between SOCSOUTH and other elements of the Defense Department, interagency partners, non-governmental organizations, etc. The fourth boundary is geographic and refers to organizations in different locations that need to work together. In this case, it refers organizations with like mission such as SOCSOUTH and its Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) counterparts.

The authors of *The Boundaryless Organization* assert that these boundaries are not entirely harmful, but they should be made permeable enough to facilitate information flow throughout the organization. In an attempt to improve its management process, SOCSOUTH has begun addressing several of these barriers to communication. By combining elements within the J3 to form the team-based REBs, SOCSOUTH has minimized the impact of the horizontal boundary. Consequently, each functional staff area is represented in the three REBs in order to increase awareness of the issues specific to their assigned sub-region. Additionally, as a result of assigning senior leadership to lead the C2 nodes at select U.S. embassies, SOCSOUTH has largely addressed vertical boundaries to communication, command, and control. Consequently the SOCFWD C2 nodes are now directly involved with subordinate units operating within the sub-region. By emphasizing interagency coordination through the C2 element, SOCSOUTH has begun to address the external boundaries, often a sticking point with USG organizations. Unfortunately the geographic boundary was not directly observed during this research. Consequently, it is unknown how permeable the geographic barrier between SOCSOUTH and the other three TSOCs is.

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<sup>102</sup> Ashkenas, *The Boundaryless Organization*, 37.

<sup>103</sup> Ashkenas, *The Boundaryless Organization*, 109.



This boundary is more relevant to tactical innovation. As other TSOCs learn, develop, and implement improved operating techniques and methods, SOCSOUTH will need to continue collaboration in order to apply best practices to its theater.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This chapter covered the definition of command and control as it applies to the SOCSOUTH distributive C2 concept and posits that the USMC definition best suits the application of C2 in the USSOUTHCOM environment. As discussed, SOCSOUTH's organizational structure is based on an industrial-aged hierarchy, which operates in the information age. In order for it to adapt to this new era, SOCSOUTH must measure success by the following factors: speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation. To accomplish this, it must continue to focus on improving communication across vertical, horizontal, external, and geographic boundaries.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED MODEL

Defeating Al Qaeda will not end the plague of networked terror. Osama bin Laden may long be remembered, and emulated, as an organizational and doctrinal pioneer who showed that network designs offer a cheap and effective new approach to war. Extremist groups and rogue elements in governments elsewhere are sure to notice that developing their own commando terror networks is an attractive, cost-effective option. Indeed, a new kind of arms race may ensue, in which rogue states and terrorist build networks for their dark purposes, while those who defend against and defeat them strive to cobble together their own counterterror networks.<sup>104</sup>

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### A. INTRODUCTION

The leadership of Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH) recently initiated a new concept for the command and control (C2) of its operations. This new concept, called distributive C2, seeks to improve speed, increase flexibility, facilitate interagency integration, and achieve innovation in a military staff bureaucracy. SOCSOUTH hopes to accomplish this by establishing forward deployed C2 nodes in each of the three sub-regions within its area of responsibility. To achieve this, SOCSOUTH's Commanding General has taken the bold measure of stationing his senior leadership away from its Florida based headquarters and repositioning them in theater where SOCSOUTH's operational assets are performing their assigned missions.

This chapter will first analyze the SOCSOUTH distributive C2 concept by filtering it through the organizational design theories previously discussed. Next, this chapter will make recommendations based on this analysis. After these recommendations, this chapter will conclude with a proposal for what this new distributive C2 concept could look like after implementation of these recommendations.

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<sup>104</sup> John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt, "Netwar Revisited: The Fight for the Future Continues," in *Networks, Terrorism, and Global Insurgency*, ed. Robert J. Bunker (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 10.

## B. ANALYSIS OF THE SOCSOUTH DISTRIBUTIVE C2 CONCEPT

SOCSOUTH's current operational environment demands that it remain flexible in order to execute its regional war on terror in the USSOUTHCOM AO. In order to achieve this, SOCSOUTH has placed emphasis on its C2 design. The C2 structure of any organization will influence how information is managed within it. The SOCSOUTH concept for C2 is more congruent with the USMC definition than with the Joint Publication 1-02 definition because it places more emphasis on how resources within the organization interact with each other and how information is employed to empower the commander. This emphasis on the power of information is echoed throughout the USSOCOM community in addressing how the U.S. must fight the GWOT.

In order for SOCSOUTH to achieve information superiority, it must place emphasis on speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation as factors for success.<sup>105</sup> SOCSOUTH must look at four boundaries within its organization in order to address these four success factors. These boundaries are the vertical, horizontal, external, and geographic.<sup>106</sup> Thus far, SOCSOUTH's C2 design has addressed these success factors to varying degree.

The *vertical boundary* is the divide between the commander (i.e., the SOCSOUTH CG) and his ground elements working in theater (i.e., SOF operating in Latin America). By placing senior personnel at the U.S. Embassies as C2 nodes, communications between the CG and his ground elements are more accurate and streamlined since the reports are funneled through a single voice.

The *horizontal boundary* is the traditional divide between the various staff directorates, through specialization, and subordinate commands, through isolation. By redesigning the J3 into regional engagement branches (REBs), horizontal boundaries between the various functional directorates are virtually transparent since the REBs are a

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<sup>105</sup> Ashkenas, *The Boundaryless Organization*.

<sup>106</sup> Ashkenas, *The Boundaryless Organization*.

cross-functional team-based arrangement. Cross talk and situational awareness between subordinate commands is essential to breaking the horizontal boundary of tactical units operating in theater.

The *external boundary* is the divide between SOCSOUTH and the rest of the interagency that has operations and/or influence in Latin America. This boundary has been partly addressed by having SOCSOUTH representative assigned to key embassies within the Southern Cone and the Andean Ridge sub-regions. A priority for these nodes has been to effect integration and deconfliction of SOF operations into the interagency. In order to further degrade this boundary, these integrations efforts must be continued at the tactical country team level, as well as the operational and strategic levels at SOCSOUTH headquarters, and Washington, DC, respectively.

The *geographic boundary* is the divide between SOCSOUTH and the other TSOCs (SOCCENT, SOCPAC, and SOCEUR). This boundary is currently being addressed by implementing informal meetings via video teleconference (VTC) between the TSOC commanders. In order to establish a broader global counterterrorism network, however, the interaction between TSOCs, and up to USSOCOM, will require more formalization and standardization.

This distributive C2 concept is already addressing these four boundaries in varying degrees. In this initial implementation phase, these early steps at traversing these boundaries are very encouraging. As a long term concept, however, there are areas of this distributive C2 concept that can be further addressed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of SOCSOUTH as it implements its RWOT plan.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Through the course of this research, the authors identified recommendations for improved performance of SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept. These suggestions are best placed into one of two categories. The first category – mission essential – concerns areas that the authors consider to be necessities for optimal execution of the distributive

C2 concept. The second category - mission enhancing - may be considered beneficial to SOCSOUTH's endeavors but their exclusion in no way degrades the chance for mission success.

## **1. Mission Essential**

### ***a. Strategic Communications Plan***

A multi-faceted strategic communications plan is of vital importance for the continued success of SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept. This plan should provide a systematic method for SOCSOUTH staff officers to mitigate the four boundaries discussed previously in this chapter.

In part, SOCSOUTH should address horizontal boundaries by ensuring that formal communication links exist between its C2 nodes. These efforts should focus on providing a method for sharing details of both operational successes and also organizational failures. This continuous process improvement challenges each node to avoid pitfalls suffered by colleagues in the other sub-regions and strive for greater success by more expeditious, flexible, and integrated operations.

Additionally, no formal agreement for cooperation with or integration of SOF currently exists at either Embassy containing a SOCSOUTH C2 node. To minimize this external boundary, SOCSOUTH should establish official measures with the applicable Chiefs of Mission to facilitate interagency cooperation at each Embassy hosting a SOCSOUTH C2 node. The Southern Cone C2 node provides an excellent example of how SOCSOUTH's team can be successfully integrated into the country team, to the benefit of all involved. This should represent the benchmark for SOCSOUTH. Additionally reducing horizontal boundaries between the C2 nodes has the added benefit of improving the external boundaries through cross-node communication.

While not directly observed, if applicable, SOCSOUTH should formalize a method to either maintain or establish means to share information with other Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). Dissolving any geographic boundaries between

the TSOCs stands to provide the same benefits as enjoyed by information sharing between the C2 nodes. All parties stand to gain from lessons learned by their counterparts.

Finally, a formal strategic communications plan between the Regional Engagement Branches (REBs), the C2 Nodes, and any SOF liaison officers (LNOs) at other U.S. Embassies (as applicable), will serve to reduce vertical and horizontal barriers to any previously established reporting structure. Applied correctly, this aspect of the plan will encourage more coordination and communication between all sub-regional nodes.

***b. SOF Liaison Officers in each Embassy***

While SOCSOUTH's forward deployed C2 nodes do improve command and control between its subordinate units, partner nation counterparts, and country team colleagues, this success is limited to the country in which the node is located. As previously discussed, these improvements stem almost entirely from personal relationships established from daily interaction and simply by being collocated. Unfortunately, these interpersonal relationships rarely extend beyond the country within which the C2 node is located. By assigning SOCSOUTH LNOs to U.S. Embassies within the sub-region, these liaisons would be the link between the C2 node and a particular country. Not only will this permit SOCSOUTH to keep a finger on the pulse of sub-regional issues beyond the confines of the C2 node, this will also help establish personal relationships and educate more of the interagency on precisely what SOF can do for that country team. This will prove invaluable to speed of coordination and integration of special operations in the event of a crisis or surge.

**2. Mission Enhancing**

***a. Permanent Party Assignments for Node Leadership***

As discussed above, SOCSOUTH's node chiefs and deputy chiefs currently serve on temporary rotational assignments. This practice differs from the rest of the country team members who are permanently assigned to the Embassy for two or

more years. Assigning SOCSOUTH's C2 node leadership to two year tours at the Embassy has the potential to minimize disruption and provide command guidance consistency to subordinate units that often occurs due to frequent turnover of leadership with different management styles and agendas. In addition, having a stable command presence at the C2 node facilitates integration into country team by allowing SOF leaders to gain and maintain the often hard won trust and interpersonal relationships with the country team members.

Not all SOCSOUTH C2 node personnel need to be assigned on a permanent basis however. Having two of the top three key personnel (the commander, the deputy, and the senior enlisted service member) on staggered two year tours would give the node continuity while maintaining the flexibility to interchange personalities and skill sets as the CG sees fit.

***b. Balance the Proper Rank with the Proper Personality***

As with any organization, possessing leadership with excellent interpersonal skills can make an average organization a great one. SOCSOUTH has experienced just how having proactive node chiefs can benefit interagency relations at an Embassy. However, SOCSOUTH should take great pains to ensure that the node chief's rank is commensurate with the scope of the mission in the sub-region, as well as ensuring that the officer is senior enough to carry some clout both with the partner nation and the Embassy country team.

***c. Interagency Training for SOCSOUTH Personnel***

Currently there is no formalized training for node personnel to learn about the various roles and responsibilities of a myriad of members on the Embassy's country team. Within DoD channels the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) offers a course entitled "SOF Interagency Collaboration" however, judging by the limited offerings it does not appear to be in high demand. As a long term solution the leadership at SOCSOUTH could institute this JSOU course as mandatory training for personnel en route to a permanent assignment to SOCSOUTH. This will increase the demand for the course which will require JSOU to offer it more frequently than it currently does.

However, JSOU class offerings are funded in accordance with the prescribed military Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process and therefore a long term fix may not be feasible in the immediate future. In order to remedy the problem in the short term however, SOCSOUTH could likely arrange for JSOU instructors to travel to Homestead ARB and provide on site training to SOCSOUTH personnel. This is not without precedent, as JSOU has provided mobile training teams for other courses in the past. There is also the possibility of sending SOCSOUTH personnel to the Department of State Foreign Service Institute for interagency training.

*d. Warranted Contracting Officer Assigned to Each Node*

At the time of this writing, neither SOCSOUTH C2 node is staffed with a contracting officer. Instead, contracting actions are either achieved by the Security Assistance Office at the Embassy, SOCSOUTH headquarters near Miami, or through a subordinate unit's parent organization. While not imperative to nodal success, assigning a contracting officer would be beneficial. Having someone in the SOCFWD who is trained and authorized to legally obligate monies and sign binding contracts on behalf of SOCSOUTH would enhance operations from a logistical sense. This enhancement translates directly to improvements to the speed with which SOF conducts operations in theater as well as increasing flexibility. A contracting officer would be able to immediately satisfy unpredictable spur of the moment operational requirements for subordinate units in the field rather than slowing down the process in order to wait for another entity to respond.

**D. PROPOSED DISTRIBUTIVE C2 MODEL**

This thesis proposes that the integration of the two mission essential recommendations discussed above into the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 Concept will create a model of theater SOF C2 that will improve SOCSOUTH's (or any TSOC's) effectiveness and efficiency in executing its RWOT as well as its participation into a larger GWOT. There are two keys to this model. First, SOCSOUTH must create greater SOF presence throughout its AOR by having personnel embedded within critical national level agencies and within every country team. Second, SOCSOUTH should establish a



theater wide communications plan that ensures cross-talk and coordination across the vertical, horizontal, external, and geographic boundaries at all levels of command.

Looking at this model (see Figure 13), the SOCSOUTH distributive C2 structure can be broken into three layers. The first layer comprises the SOCSOUTH headquarters and national level within the continental United States. The second layer resides at the forward C2 node and sub-region level within the Andean Ridge, the Southern Cone, and the Caribbean and Central America. The final layer is at the SOF LNO and individual country team level within each U.S. Embassy throughout Latin America.

At the first level, SOCSOUTH improves its presence by exchanging LNOs with the interagency, the GCC, and other SOF commands. SOCSOUTH transcends the vertical boundaries through its creating of its four forward C2 nodes. Horizontal boundaries are crossed by SOCSOUTH fully integrating its intelligence and logistics directorates into each of the J3's REBs. External boundaries are permeated through the aforementioned LNO exchange, and the geographic boundary is degraded through formal lines of communication with other TSOCs and USSOCOM.

SOCSOUTH improves its presence within each sub-region by establishing these permanent forward C2 nodes within each sub-region at the second level. This also greatly enhances SOCSOUTH's ability to transcend external boundaries by creating a formal mechanism for interagency integration within each sub-region. Horizontal boundaries are crossed through a formal communications plan that has each sub-region C2 node cross-talking and coordinating operations with each other as the terror enemy's influence and operations move from one sub-region to another.

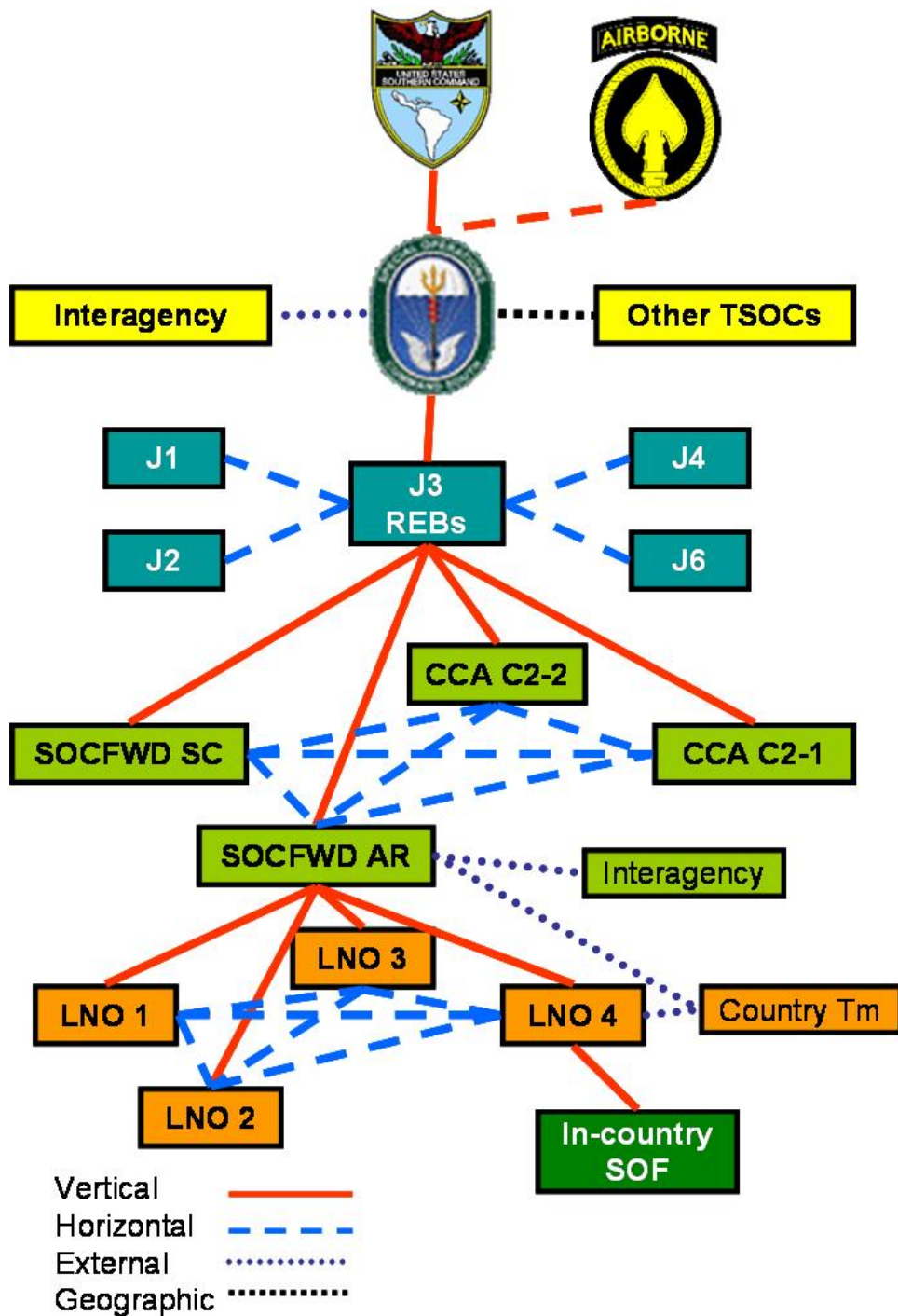


Figure 13. Thesis Proposed Distributive C2 Model

At level three, SOCSOUTH finds its presence most enhanced through the establishment of LNOs within each U.S. embassy in its AOR. These same liaisons will facilitate the crossing of external boundaries by establishing relationships with their

respective country teams and other organizations operating in that specific country. As with the forward sub-regional C2 nodes, these LNOs will cross talk to track and deconflict operations as the influence and operations of the terror threat moves between individual countries.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This chapter first took SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept and analyzed it through various organizational design lenses. This analysis illustrated that SOCSOUTH and this concept faced four boundaries that needed to be transcended in order to be effective: the vertical, the horizontal, the external, and the geographic.

After this analysis, this thesis made several recommendations for increasing the success of SOCSOUTH's distributive C2 concept. These recommendations are best categorized as either mission essential (work smarter) or mission enhancing (work easier). There were two mission essential recommendations: (1) create a strategic communication plan; and (2) place SOF liaison officers in all U.S. Embassies within SOCSOUTH's area of responsibility. There were four mission enhancing recommendations: (1) permanently assigning key node leadership to staggered two year tours; (2) balancing the proper rank of the forward C2 node leader with the proper personality to interact with the interagency effectively; (3) establishing formal interagency training for SOCSOUTH personnel; and (4) assigning a warranted contracting officer to each node.

This chapter concluded by proposing its own model of distributive C2 that integrated the mission essential recommendations with the SOCSOUTH concept. With LNOs and a strategic communications plan in place, this model of distributive C2 achieves two goals: it creates greater SOF presence throughout the AOR and within critical national level agencies and it establishes a theater wide communications plan that ensures cross-talk and coordination across all levels of command.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The War on Terror will be a long war. Yet we have mobilized to win other long wars, and we can and will win this one. During the Cold War we created an array of domestic and international institutions and enduring partnerships to defeat the threat of communism. Today, we require similar transformational structures to carry forward the fight against terror and to help ensure our ultimate success.<sup>107</sup>

National Strategy for Combating  
Terrorism, September, 2006

The purpose of this thesis was to conduct a thorough analysis of the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 concept and propose recommendations for improvement of its effectiveness and efficiency. This was accomplished by first conducting a thorough threat assessment of the SOCSOUTH AOR, followed by a detailed description of the SOCSOUTH Distributive C2 Concept. The authors then conducted site visits and personal interviews at the Andean Ridge and Southern Cone forward C2 nodes. This description and site visit observations were analyzed through several theories of organizational design to develop two sets of recommendations – mission essential and mission enhancing. These recommendations were then integrated into the SOCSOUTH concept to derive a proposed model for distributive C2.

What was discovered was that SOCSOUTH's original concept for distributive C2 was valid not only for the C2 within its own AOR but for other TSOCs as well. By implementing the mission essential recommendations – in essence using the proposed model in this thesis – SOCSOUTH will have a C2 structure that allows it to effectively combat terrorism in the information age. This concept of distributive C2 allows SOCSOUTH to execute its operations quicker (speed), adapt more efficiently (flexibility), coordinate its operations with the interagency more effectively (integration), and ensures that cross-talk and the sharing of ideas occurs (innovation).

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<sup>107</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 19.

## **A. OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION**

Despite the merits of this concept of distributive C2, SOCSOUTH will face significant obstacles in getting this concept fully resourced and implemented. Within the DoD, SOCSOUTH will face challenges to breaking the institutional norms well established in the hierarchy of the DoD. Outside of the DoD, SOCSOUTH will have to battle the politics and self interests of the various government agencies whose support is required for this concept to work.

### **1. Obstacles Inside the Department of Defense**

In regards to the obstacles within the DoD, Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, in their book *Essence of Decision*, propose their Organizational Behavior Model (OBM). The OBM views actions as “outputs of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behavior.”<sup>108</sup>

The process of decision-making in the OBM (i.e., selecting what action to do) is centered on the enactment, or reenactment, of existing routines. Existing routines are characterized by organizational objectives, sequential action toward these objectives, standard operating procedures (SOPs), programs and repertoires, uncertainty avoidance, problem-directed search, and organizational learning and change. Drastic change only occurs when there is a budgetary feast, a prolonged budgetary famine, or dramatic performance failure. The dominant factors influencing decisions in the OBM can be broken down into the short-term and the long-term. In the short-term, a course of action (COA) is selected based on how closely it resembles existing outputs. In the long-term, a COA is selected based on how closely it matches the organization’s views on its tasks, capabilities, programs, and routines.<sup>109</sup>

Under the OBM, SOCSOUTH will have to break the “this is how we’ve always done it” mentality in order to acquire the resources and support it needs to fully

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<sup>108</sup> Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York, NY: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishing, 1999), 143.

<sup>109</sup> Allison and Graham, *Essence of Decision*, 391.

implement this concept. Existing organizational norms, SOP, and programs will have to be altered or discontinued in order to fully implement this concept.

## **2. Obstacles Outside the Department of Defense**

While the obstacles within the DoD seem significant, the obstacles SOCSOUTH will face gaining the support of other government departments and agencies will be significantly greater. SOCSOUTH will have to contend with the inherent politics of Washington, DC. These politics manifest themselves in the inherent interests of key players and key departments carrying more weight than the greater good of the Nation.

In her book *Flawed by Design*, Amy Zegart explains her theory on how national security agencies (for the purposes of this thesis, SOCSOUTH can be seen as a national security agency) are created and evolve through her National Security Agency Model. This model has at its base the premise that “national security organizations are not rationally designed to serve the national interest”<sup>110</sup> since their formation and future evolution is so heavily influenced by the actions of separate government players acting in their own self interests. To counter the individual interests of government players, Zegart proposes in her model that a national security agency will only evolve if the Executive Branch drives change.<sup>111</sup> While existing bureaucratic actors will still fight to preserve their own institutional interests since they have much to gain or lose with the alterations to the status quo, it is the power and will of the Executive that will see that national interests are best served.

For SOCSOUTH, this means that the support and political backing of the Secretary of Defense and the President are essential in gaining the resources and support from outside the DoD required to fully implement this concept. The support of the Executive will be needed to dictate changes in the DoS, DoJ, DNI, and other government departments.

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<sup>110</sup> Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NCS* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>111</sup> Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 39.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS FOR USSOCOM AND OTHER TSOCs**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this thesis has both validated this distributive concept for SOCSOUTH and also validated it as a C2 construct for other TSOCs as they execute their own RWOTs. As each TSOC reorganizes and redesigns their C2 structure to better network its organization and push assets forward into their respective theaters, USSOCOM will, by the actions of these TSOCs, have the basis for its own global counterterrorism network.

To fully take advantage of these regional wars on terror C2 networks, however, more drastic changes to the existing relationships between the TSOCs, their respective GCCs, and USSOCOM are required. Each TSOC is best postured to plan, resource, and fight a regional WOT as part of a broader global WOT. Under the existing TSOC/GCC/SOCOM relationship, however, each TSOC belongs to a GCC with only coordination lines existing between the TSOC and USSOCOM. In order to expand this regional distributive C2 concept into a global distributive C2 network, this relationship would have to be reversed. Each TSOC would have to then fall under the operational control of USSOCOM with only coordination lines existing with each GCC.

The expansion of the SOCSOUTH distributive C2 concept to other TSOCs and USSOCOM has broader implications for the force providers that man each TSOC and USSOCOM. Besides reorganizing each TSOC into a war-fighting command (more dollars, equipment, and manpower), the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines that operate within them will need additional training and education, regardless of their branch of service or assigned military occupational specialty. Language and cultural awareness training will be a must for all personnel assigned to forward C2 nodes. Leaders will have to have a greater understanding of the task, responsibilities, and purposes of other government departments they interact with. These other government departments will need education on what these forward C2 nodes are there to do, and, perhaps more importantly, what these nodes can do for them.

## **C. FINAL REMARKS**

Since transnational terrorist organizations are not stopped by national, regional, or continental borders, a TSOC must be prepared to conduct operations across a wide range of political and social environments. SOCSOUTH understands this and has begun to implement its new distributive C2 concept. This thesis was started as an attempt to validate this concept and propose any recommendations for future improvements. What has emerged during this thesis process is that with two essential modifications this distributive C2 concept cannot only improve SOCSOUTH's ability to execute its RWOT, but can aid all the other TSOCs in their counterterrorism effort. Additionally, by further integrating these TSOCs under one command (USSOCOM), a global counterterrorism network is, in effect, created.



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